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ABSTRACT

This report provides preschool and early elementary schoolteachers with a summary of current research and theories on the social development of young children, relating the findings of psychological studies to classroom practice in the areas of cooperative behavior, moral development, achievement motivation, and the dynamics of peer interaction. Based on the idea that psychological research often provides a basis for the procedures that teachers use in the classroom, this report is designed to relate research findings to the practical issues teachers face in the classroom. For each topic, 3 types of information are presented: (1) Narrative discussions of psychological research in which the research findings presented are illustrated with specific examples; (2) a digest of recommendations which chart specific classroom teaching techniques with a rationale based on pertinent research findings; and (3) a reference section to assist further study. (GO)

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Social Development in Young Children

A Report for Teachers

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Preface

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Any literature survey requires many hours of tracking down and sifting through potentially relevant books and journal articles. We are grateful to Christy Crowley for her diligent assistance in this task.

Our special thanks to Howard Flexer for his long hours of careful work preparing the manuscript, and to Eileen Buckland, whose skill in managing the practical details of the project and unfailing good humor have sustained us all.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The purpose of this report is to provide preschool and early elementary school teachers with a summary of current psychological research concerned with the social development of young children. Psychological research often provides a basis for procedures teachers use in the classroom. It is difficult, however, for individual teachers to keep up with the latest developments in psychological research. Even when research findings are accessible, their relevance to classroom practices is often difficult to determine. This report is designed to relate research findings to practical issues teachers face in the classroom.

The report is limited to particular topics concerning children's social behavior. A companion report, entitled "The Cognitive Development of Young Children: A Report for Teachers," focuses on developmental changes in young children's ways of thinking. The two reports were prepared as a joint project and share similar goals and formats. The reader is encouraged to use them together.

Basic Research and Practical Implications: A Note of Caution

Summarizing research in psychology can be a risky undertaking. What seems "true" at one point in time often becomes "false" when new information becomes available or when new theories change the interpretation of old findings. Teachers are understandably wary of changing fads in educational practice--fads which often grow out of psychologists' changing conceptions of the "truth" about child development. The preparation of this report has been guided by a desire to preserve a cautious and moderate perspective on new research and theories, in order to minimize the dangers of premature application of incompletely tested psychological conclusions. For this reason, appealing and possibly effective procedures for dealing with children which are not based on reliable findings of experimental psychological research have not been included.

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Substantial problems arise in any attempt to formulate practical suggestions for professionals in one discipline based on research findings from another discipline. Throughout this report, recommendations for teachers have been derived from logical extensions of experimental findings and classroom adaptations of experimental procedures.

Some of the proposed procedures may prove unworkable in the classroom, even though they make sense from a psychological perspective. When evaluating potential applications of psychological findings an important point to remember is that psychological research is usually designed to derive probability statements about the behavior of groups of people. If a certain procedure is, on the average, more effective than another, it may be recommended here. It is quite possible, however, that individual children or teachers will work better with a procedure that is, on the average, less effective. Teachers must ultimately be the judges of what works best for them and their students.

Hopefully, this report will serve to stimulate teachers' thinking about what is happening in their classrooms, and offer some insights into why some teaching strategies seem to fail and others are consistently successful.

Three types of information are presented in this report. The bulk of the report is devoted to narrative discussions of psychological research on aggression, cooperative behavior, moral development, motivation to perform in school, and the dynamics of peer interaction. In these sections, research findings are presented and explained, and specific examples are provided to illustrate how the psychological findings can be applied to the classroom.

A digest of recommendations precedes each narrative section. The digests are prepared in a chart format. They summarize practical suggestions together with short rationales derived from psychological findings and provide bibliographic references for additional reading. The digests serve as a brief introductory guide to topics

explained in more detail in the narrative sections. Their meaning may be more fully understood in the context of the narrative discussion. The reader may wish to review the digests again after completing the narrative sections.

The extensive reference sections concluding each chapter document sources of information and offer the reader a guide for further study. Citations in the narrative are keyed to the related references by number. Since the report covers psychological, rather than educational research, the sources reviewed have been primarily the professional experimental journals in developmental psychology.

Teachers interested in pursuing further questions concerning the dynamics of children's social development may find the following sources particularly interesting:

Hartup, W. W. The Young Child: Reviews of Research, Volume 2. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1972.

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Thomson, C. Skills for Young Children. Unpublished manuscript, Edna A. Hill Child Development Preschool Laboratories, Department of Human Development, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1972.

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Chapter 2

How Children Change and Learn

Teachers have the important job of creating a total learning environment for young children. Children spend a great deal of time at school, and during that time they are continually learning, whether what is learned is planned by the teacher or not. School can provide not only an opportunity for intellectual instruction, but also a supportive space in which children can develop, practice, and perfect both cognitive and social skills. An awareness of the learning principles described by psychologists can help teachers produce an effective environment for learning. The following discussion of the ways children learn provides a general framework for understanding the balance of the report. The principles outlined here are applied in detail to specific types of social behavior in the following chapters of the report.

Children Interpret Events in the Context of Their Own Experience

Children are not passive recipients of knowledge, shaped like lumps of clay by powerful environmental forces. Children constantly act upon their environment, changing it in various ways and gathering experience which they interpret and integrate according to their current level of understanding. The same event can mean radically different things to children at different levels of development who have different experiential histories. Suppose a teacher, losing patience, shouts in a loud voice, "I've had enough! You go sit down and be quiet!" John, who has never been shouted at by an adult, may be deeply hurt. He may assume not only that he has done something to irritate the teacher, but also that he himself is an evil person. Mary, whose mother shouts at her a great deal, may just tune out the teacher's loud voice and go on about her business. Peter, a slightly more mature child, may understand that something he has done has upset the teacher, who is reacting out of anger.

Peter will neither take the reprimand as an attack on his personal worth, nor will he ignore it. Rather, he will be able to evaluate the episode in a broader context of interpersonal relationships.

Experiences which stretch children's comprehension without greatly exceeding their level of sophistication are effective learning situations, in part because such events are most likely to engage a child's attention. Children become interested because of the nature of the task and its relationship to their own developmental level. Events which are completely familiar and well understood are likely to be ignored. Events which are so unusual as to be incomprehensible are likely to be actively avoided or misinterpreted. Children entering preschool for the first time, for example, may ignore the building blocks and go directly to the more familiar crayons. Only by observing other children playing with blocks will they begin to understand how blocks can be related to their own play interests (3, 5, 6, 8).

Children Learn by Observing Others

One of the best ways to learn how people behave is to watch them. Young children are avid people-watchers. From their observations they learn how to perform new behaviors and they develop expectations concerning the consequences of their actions Whether or not children will actually perform behaviors they have learned by watching other people depends on many factors, including the personal characteristics of the model, what happens as a result of the model's actions, whether the child's own situation is perceived to be similar to the model's, and whether the activity is within the child's present range of ability. Teachers can be particularly effective models since, in general, children are most likely to imitate people they know and like and people who are powerful controllers of desired resources. Peers are also effective models, since children often imitate people they consider to be like themselves (1, 2, 4).

Children Learn from the Consequences of Their Behavior

Children's behavior always results in a consequence from the environment, whether or not a teacher has planned for the consequence to occur. The way each child interprets those consequences will have a strong influence on whether the child will engage in similar behaviors in the future.

Psychologists have classified consequences of behavior according to their effect on subsequent behavior. Consequences which tend to cause behaviors to reoccur are called positive reinforcements; consequences which tend to suppress the occurrence of behavior are referred to as punishments. Teachers often assume that any pleasant event is a positive reinforcement, and that any unpleasant event is a punishment. When psychologists use these terms, however, they refer to the effect of the consequence on behavior, and not to an evaluation of the event as pleasant or unpleasant in itself. In fact, a single event may have distinctly different effects on different children in different situations. Patting a child on the back, for example, may encourage some children to continue their activity, while it may cause other children to stop what they are doing. The only way teachers can be sure of the effect of any consequence is to observe the child's reaction to it.

Consequences affect behavior in two distinct ways.---One function of consequences is to tell children whether or not they are doing the right thing. Information feedback is critical to almost all learning. Feedback is most effective when it immediately follows a child's attempt. Children quickly forget what they have done, and need to know whether an action is right or wrong before they have forgotten what that action was.

The second function of consequences is to provide motivation to perform or to avoid performing an action. In many instances a single event provides both feedback on the correctness of an action, and a pleasant or unpleasant consequence which influences the child's desire to repeat that action in the future. A teacher's

"that's right" not only gives necessary information about the child's performance, but also may make the child feel good for having earned the teacher's approval. Of course, the effect of any event on a child's behavior depends on the child's own interpretation of the event. A child who dislikes a particular teacher may try to avoid doing things which earn that teacher's approval.

The reinforcements which affect a child's behavior fall into three general categories; intrinsic, social, and material.---Many activities are pleasurable in themselves, and thus provide intrinsic reinforcement. Reading a good book or solving a puzzle provide their own rewards. Certain psychologists, elaborating on the ideas of Jean Piaget, place great emphasis on the child's inborn desire to learn and experience new things, to solve problems and master skills for the pure pleasure of practicing, mastering, and conquering a problem. The motivating power of the fun inherent in the process of doing something is often supplemented by built-in feedback on successful completion of a task. Putting together a puzzle is an interesting activity in itself. There is an extra kick, however, when each piece successfully settles in place and a great feeling of satisfaction when the whole is assembled (3, 5, 8, 10).

In addition to reinforcement emanating from various activities, the social environment is constantly delivering reinforcement to children. In a classroom, attention from teachers and peers has a powerful effect on children's activities. In fact, adults, and other children often unwittingly attend to (and thus reinforce) behaviors that are disruptive and undesirable. Even a negative reaction from a teacher constitutes a form of attention which may increase the likelihood that an undesirable behavior will reoccur. Teachers can take advantage of the young child's susceptibility to social reinforcement by attending to all efforts children make in the right direction, and ignoring their less desirable actions whenever possible.

Some children, however, may be relatively indifferent to the teacher's attention and approval. Under these circumstances, tangible material rewards or tokens which can be accumulated to earn rewards and special privileges can provide powerful alternatives to intrinsic or social reinforcement.

One problem with providing rewards not usually found in the classroom situation is that children very quickly become aware of the rules of the game. When the rewards stop abruptly, behaviors which have not become intrinsically reinforcing tend to drop back to their original low level of occurrence. This effect can be minimized by spacing out rewards before eliminating them completely. When rewards for a particular behavior are gradually decreased, children will engage in that activity for longer and longer periods of time with no external reward. Intensive social or material reinforcement is best reserved for occasions when a child needs help learning a skill to the point where practicing it becomes fun, or increasing a social behavior (such as playing cooperatively with other children) so that natural reinforcers in the situation can take over.

Using Learning Principles in the Classroom

These learning principles are discussed in more detail in later sections of the report. However, teachers may find the following pointers useful in considering how to structure the environment in their classrooms most effectively (7, 9).

To help children learn a new behavior, or increase the frequency of a useful behavior they do not often engage in:

1. Observe carefully to determine what events are reinforcing for each particular child. What activities, toys, and forms of attention does the child enjoy most? Who is the child's favorite teacher? Who is the child's favorite friend?

2. Arrange for immediate reinforcement to follow each successful performance of the desired behavior. For example, Lee, who habitually throws her coat on the floor, is learning to hang it up. Each time Lee hangs up her coat, a teacher might comment, "Good for you, you remembered to hang up your coat. Now you can play with the play dough." It may take several days until Lee has learned to hang up her coat automatically, and many reinforcements may be necessary.
3. Provide verbal cues, or suggestions, to help the child identify situations where the new behavior is appropriate and to serve as a reminder. A teacher might say, "Lee, you almost forgot to hang up your coat!" or, "As soon as you hang up your coat, you can play with the play dough."
4. Arrange for the child to see favorite individuals performing the desired behavior. Lee can be present while teachers hang up their coats. Teachers can comment on other children's behavior, saying "Pam and Mike are hanging up their coats."
5. Reinforce the child for increasingly successful steps in the right direction. Avoid expecting the child to perform an entire action sequence correctly the first time before receiving a reward. If Lee is a very young child, hanging up her coat may be a difficult procedure. In teaching her this skill, teachers might first reinforce her for getting the coat in her locker, then for getting some portion of the coat on a hook, and finally for actually hanging the coat on the hook neatly.
6. When the child has mastered the new skill and is performing it at appropriate times, gradually decrease the reinforcement. When Lee has consistently remembered to hang her coat up neatly without reminders, teachers can reduce their specific reinforcement to every other day, then once a week. Eventually no specific reinforcement may be needed at all.

Teachers might occasionally make general statements such as, "I'm glad you are remembering to hang up your coats. It certainly makes the room look neater."

To help children stop performing maladaptive behaviors:

1. Restructure the situation so that the child receives no positive reinforcement for performing the activity. In some cases, the behavior in question will increase in rate before it decreases, so be sure to give the procedure enough time to take effect. Remember that reinforcement delivered intermittently strengthens the behavior and makes it more difficult to get rid of. For example, at snack time John consistently jumps up from his seat, shouts, "Me first!" and grabs his snack. The teacher can ignore John, passing the snack only to children who are quietly sitting in their places. The teacher might comment, "Bob is sitting so quietly that I think I will give him his snack first." John gets no snack as long as he is jumping and shouting.
2. Arrange for reinforcements to follow behaviors which are incompatible with the undesirable behavior. The teacher can comment, "When you are sitting quietly, John, you may have some snack." As soon as John stops shouting and sits down, the teacher can take advantage of this good behavior by immediately passing him the snack while praising him for sitting quietly.
3. Arrange for mild but effective unpleasant consequences to follow particularly negative behaviors. Such consequences should follow naturally from the situation wherever possible. If John, for example, begins to jump and shout once he has his snack, the teacher can remove the snack.

4. Actively ignore a child who is misbehaving while simultaneously attending to a child who is behaving appropriately. Such active ignoring is especially effective if the observant teacher immediately focuses attention on the ignored child as soon as he or she stops misbehaving. When snack is finished, John may continue to jump and shout while the teacher is trying to explain something to the group. The teacher can involve the group in an interesting conversation or activity, pointedly ignoring John until the moment he quiets down.

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Chapter 3

Aggression

Digest of Recommendations

Suggested Teaching Techniques	Rationale	Selected References
To minimize aggression in the classroom:		
1. Provide sufficient space so that children are not overcrowded.	Sufficient space may eliminate accidental pushing and shoving that can lead to retaliatory aggression. Young children do not distinguish between accidental and purposeful attacks.	Bandura, 1973; Shantz and Voydanoff, 1973
2. Provide sufficient materials so that children can keep busy without competing for resources.	Children involved in constructive activities may be less likely to behave aggressively.	Davitz, 1952
3. Eliminate toys which suggest aggressive themes for play, such as guns, toy soldiers, and batman or batgirl costumes.	Toys associated with aggression may elicit aggressive behavior. Children who play games with aggressive themes also tend to engage in more non-thematic aggression.	Bandura, 1973; Berkowitz, 1972; Feshbach, 1956

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Suggested Teaching Techniques	Rationale	Selected References
4. Do not allow an aggressor to benefit from aggressive acts.	Children rewarded for aggression learn that aggression pays off. Other children in the group will be more likely to imitate the aggressive child if that child's aggression is rewarded.	Bandura, 1973; Patterson, Littman, and Bricker, 1967; Feshbach and Feshbach 1972
5. Step between aggressor and victim, ignoring aggressor while attending to victim.	This action prevents the aggressor from obtaining either the reward of victim submission or the reward of teacher attention. Children are likely to imitate the teacher's demonstration of concern for someone in need.	Bandura and Walters, 1963; Hinkston, Reese, LeBlanc, and Baer, 1973; Scott, Burton and Yarrow, 1967
6. Suggest to the victim ways of dealing with the aggressor, for example, tell the victim to say to the aggressor, "No hitting" or I'm playing with this now."	Victim can practice and model assertive but nonaggressive behavior. A victim who does not submit is less likely to be attacked in the future.	Patterson, Littman, and Bricker, 1967; Slaby, 1974

Suggested Teaching Techniques	Rationale	Selected References
7. Intervene in a potentially aggressive situation before aggression occurs, encouraging children to use nonaggressive verbal methods to solve conflicts. Provide verbal alternatives for children who cannot think of them on their own, e.g., "Tell him, 'I'm playing with this now;" or, "You can ask him to trade with you." Praise the children's use of verbal alternatives, the peer cooperation that may follow, or the acceptance of "no" for an answer.	Children who have alternative responses readily available are less likely to resort to aggression to get what they want. A child who asks for an object is more likely to receive cooperation; a child who grabs the object is more likely to elicit retaliatory aggression. Teacher reinforcement can increase children's use of nonaggressive solutions to interpersonal problems.	Slaby, 1974; Spivack and Shure, 1974.
8. Model a reasoned, cooperative, nonaggressive approach to social conflicts.	Children imitate behavior of people they like and people who are powerful. They often adopt teachers' behaviors.	Bandura and Walters 1963; Scott, Burton and Yarrow, 1967

Suggested Teaching Techniques	Rationale	Selected References
9. Discuss and demonstrate alternative problem-solving methods at times when aggression is not occurring.	Lectures following an aggressive incident may serve as rewarding attention to the aggressor. Children aware of alternative behaviors can choose a nonaggressive solution.	Bandura, 1973; Chittenden, 1942; Spivack and Shure, 1974
10. Consistently attend to and reinforce all cooperative behavior.	Cooperation may be incompatible with aggression. Children consistently reinforced for cooperative behavior are likely to increase cooperative interactions while simultaneously decreasing aggressive behavior.	Altman, 1971; Brown and Elliot, 1965; Goodlet, Goodlet, and Dredge, 1970; Harris, Wolf, and Baer, 1967; Risley and Baer, 1973; Slaby and Crowley, 1975
11. Attend to cooperative verbal statements.	Attention to cooperative verbal statements is likely to increase actual cooperative behavior while decreasing aggression.	Parke, Ewall, and Slaby, 1972; Slaby, 1975; Slaby and Crowley, 1975

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Suggested Teaching Techniques	Rationale	Selected References
12. Avoid physical punishment for aggression.	Use of physical punishment provides a model of aggression and legitimizes the use of force. Children observing such techniques are likely to use them for resolving their own conflicts.	Bandura, 1973; Berkowitz, 1973
13. Do not encourage children to redirect aggressive behavior toward inanimate objects.	Children encouraged to be aggressive toward inanimate objects are likely to be aggressive toward other people.	Bandura, 1973; Berkowitz, 1973; Mallick and McCandless, 1966; Walters and Brown, 1963

What is Aggressive Behavior?

"Betty and Michael are fighting again, but what can you expect from such aggressive children." Attributing children's aggressive behavior to the fact that they are "aggressive" is a particularly destructive form of circular reasoning. Children learn to perform aggressive behaviors such as kicking, hitting, and biting, and they learn to identify situations where these behaviors will have rewarding results. An important first step in dealing with children's aggression is to specify exactly what children do to evoke the label "aggressive."

Most people agree that aggressive behavior involves actions which may result in physical or psychological injury to another individual. This definition of aggression does not include assertive behavior, such as standing up for one's rights in a nonhostile way. Aggressive acts include physical behaviors such as hitting, pushing, and kicking; verbal acts such as shouting insults, making threats and calling names; and destruction of another's property.

Many cases are not clear-cut. Whether or not an act is labeled aggressive involves a social judgment made by the observer, who is influenced by society's norms and by his or her private belief system. One observer watching two boys wrestling, for example, might conclude that they were just "fooling around," while another might decide they were showing unwarranted aggression (5).

Aggressive behavior usually involves expenditure of a great deal of energy. Actions which are considered innocuous in a mild form may be labeled aggressive when performed with more force, even though the form of the action did not change. A gentle pat can turn into a hit, an affectionate hug can become a tackle, depending on the vigor of the activity. Children who often become excited or children who are generally characterized by a high level of activity are often labeled aggressive because of the intensity of their behavior (33).

In deciding whether or not to consider a particular behavior an act of aggression, observers often attempt to take into account the intent behind the act. Accidentally tripping and falling against someone is not usually considered aggressive, while a deliberate push is. Trying to uncover the "real" intentions underlying a given act can be quite difficult, however.

Suppose Shirley pushes Pat off a tricycle. Did Shirley really mean to hurt Pat, or did she just want the tricycle? In cases like this, debate about the "real" motivation may be superfluous. What is important is the behavior which has injured Pat. In an attempt to minimize judgments of intent and their inherent ambiguities, psychologists investigating aggression have usually focused on the overt form of behaviors which can potentially injure another person.

In determining ways of dealing with children's aggression, it is important to place aggression in its proper context as one of several types of social interaction. Aggression is both a means of solving interpersonal conflict and a powerful way of getting a reaction from the social environment. If children can develop a repertoire of social skills that provide them with many alternative methods for resolving conflicts and producing interesting reactions from the environment, they are less likely to resort to aggressive behaviors (21, 46).

The following sections of this chapter will discuss the ways children learn how and when to behave aggressively, the kinds of situations which are likely to provoke aggressive responses, and methods teachers can use to minimize aggression in their classrooms.

How Do Children Learn Aggressive Behavior?

Aggressive behavior is learned behavior. Children are continually learning new and improved ways to punch, kick, and push each other by watching other children and adults and by trying out new forms of aggression to find out what works best.

Children also learn that in many cases the use of aggression pays off. If the cowboy on television hits the bad guy hard enough, the bad guy won't bother him any more. In school, the children who push and hit the hardest usually get their own way.

Children learn aggression by observing.---Every day children are provided examples of the use of aggression to solve interpersonal problems. There is a growing body of evidence which indicates that such examples are taken to heart (5). Every parent who uses physical punishment is demonstrating the use of physical aggression and is, in fact, likely to have children who behave aggressively. Parents who spank their children for aggressive behavior may produce children who are nonaggressive around their parents, but such children are likely to use aggression themselves when interacting with their peers (5, 10, 11, 39). Children not only learn how to perform aggressive acts, but also when to perform them.

Television programs, from Saturday morning cartoons to the evening news, provide children with an extensive how-to-do-it course in aggression. Several studies have demonstrated that after watching aggressive acts performed on film or television children tend to view aggression as a successful form of social interaction and to behave more aggressively with their peers. Children will imitate specific aggressive actions that they have never performed before, such as hitting with a hammer held high over the head. The models who elicit this imitation may be adults, children, or even cartoon models attacking either inanimate objects or other people. There is no evidence supporting the commonly held view that watching aggression enables children to release "pent-up hostility" which otherwise might result in aggressive behavior. On the contrary, viewing aggressive incidents increases children's knowledge of how to perform aggressive acts and reduces their inhibitions against behaving aggressively themselves (5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 23, 25, 26, 27).

Some people feel that aggression on television will have no aggression-eliciting effects if the aggressor gets his "just deserts" in the end. One problem with this

view is that very young children often do not understand the connection between events in a television program which are separated by a complicated story line and several commercials. The fact that the villain goes to jail at the end of a half hour chase may be considered a completely separate event from the gory murder successfully committed at the beginning of the program (15). Children who understand that an aggressive model has been punished may not immediately imitate the model's behavior. If specifically offered a reward for showing what the model did, however, children can often correctly demonstrate the model's aggressive actions. Even when an aggressor is punished, then, children can still learn new forms of aggressive behavior simply by observing them. Whether or not they will adopt these new forms of aggression depends on what they expect to happen as a result of their own aggression in any given situation (2).

Exposure to aggressive incidents also tends to increase a child's tolerance for aggression in others. In one study (18), third and fourth graders saw a movie and then watched a videotape of two younger children whom they believed to be playing in an empty room. The children were instructed to seek adult help if the younger children got into trouble. Those "babysitters" who had previously seen a violent cowboy film tolerated higher levels of aggression in their charges before seeking help than children who had seen a neutral film.

Children learn aggression through practice and reward.---Children are often rewarded for their own aggressive behaviors. Aggression usually provokes a substantial reaction from the environment. With a single aggressive act a child can cause other children to cry, shout, and run; adults to move quickly and talk loudly; objects to fly through the air and crash with a satisfying thud. Even if a child receives no material benefit from an aggressive act, causing such a pronounced disturbance can be reinforcing in itself.

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In an extensive observational study of preschool children's free play (33), 80 percent of children's aggressive behaviors were directly rewarded in some way. Victims gave up objects to their attackers, cried, or ran off and left the territory to the aggressor. When an aggressive act was successful, the aggressor was more likely to attack the same victim in the same way again. Many children started the year at school with low frequencies of aggressive behavior. As they observed the aggressive activities of other children, and frequently became victims themselves, they began to adopt defensive aggression strategies. If their defensive aggression was successful in warding off attackers, these children began to initiate aggressive attacks. The incidence of aggressive behavior among these children increased dramatically over the course of the year. The combination of observing peer aggression and being rewarded for their own aggressive activities had taught them how and when to be aggressive. Initially nonaggressive children who were unsuccessful in their attempts at aggression did not increase their aggressive behavior. They learned that, for them, aggression did not pay off.

Contrary to popular beliefs, children encouraged to behave aggressively toward inanimate objects are likely to try out the aggressive skills learned in these situations on their peers. In one study, 7-year-olds boys who received rewards for punching a rubber clown were more aggressive toward peers both in a competitive game and in a free play situation (47). In another study, 5- and 6-year-old boys who were rewarded for pressing a level vigorously were more aggressive toward peers than boys rewarded for pressing the lever gently (48). Rewarding aggression even in the innocuous context of doll play gives children an opportunity to perfect aggressive skill which may eventually be used against peers.

What Conditions Tend to Elicit Aggressive Behavior?

Even though children may have mastered a variety of aggressive behaviors, whether or not they perform aggressive acts is determined by factors within any

particular situation. Studies comparing children's aggressive behavior in school, at home, and in the laboratory have found that the same children are likely to show extremely different amounts of aggressive behavior in different situations (20, 32, 40). A child who terrorizes friends in the backyard at home may not use aggressive behaviors at school.

Past experience determines how children will respond to emotionally arousing incidents.---Some psychologists have maintained that all aggression is caused by frustration. A frustrating experience, such as being prevented from reaching a goal, may indeed provoke an emotional reaction, which may in turn energize a high-intensity response. Since aggressive acts do involve a great deal of energy, they may be more likely to occur following frustration than relatively passive activities. Research has indicated, however, that past experience influences exactly how children will direct the emotional energy aroused by frustration (14, 17, 20).

The classic study of the effects of experience on responses to frustration involved 7- to 9-year-old children attending a summer camp (17). Half of the children spent seven sessions playing aggressive games. In one such game the individual covering a spot on the floor when the buzzer sounded was the winner. All types of aggressive behavior were praised and encouraged. The remaining children spent their sessions engaging in constructive, cooperative activities such as drawing murals and completing jig saw puzzles together. Following these sessions all of the children were given candy bars and shown the beginning of a movie. In the middle of the movie the experimenter stepped in, took away the candy, and moved the children to another room where they were allowed to play freely with a standard set of toys. Although all children had experienced the same frustrating event, their reactions to this frustration differed radically. Children who had played aggressive games behaved more aggressively following frustration; children who had engaged in cooperative activities behaved more constructively. Frustration per se does not automatically elicit aggression.

Children use aggression to retaliate.---Accidental or purposeful physical attacks can provoke aggressive responses from the victims (20). Preschool children who are frequent victims tend to increase their level of aggressive behavior (33).

Young children find it difficult to take into account the intentions of another individual, and they may respond aggressively even to an accidental shove. It is important that children in group settings have enough space to carry on their activities without the accidental physical conflicts which may provoke aggressive retaliation. In one study, 7-, 9-, and 12-year old boys were asked how they would respond to an aggressor in a variety of story situations. The 7-year-olds chose to retaliate with aggression whether the attack in the story was intentional or accidental, while the 9- and 12-year-olds responded less aggressively to an accidental attack than to an intentional one (41).

Emphasizing the unintentional nature of an attack may help children refrain from retaliating in kind. In one study, third graders prevented from winning a prize by the clumsy behavior of another child were given a chance to either help or hurt that child in performing a similar task. When the experimenter explained that the frustrator's actions were accidental, children were less inclined to choose a response which would hurt the frustrator (30).

The setting can provoke aggression.---Even in the absence of direct provocation, elements in the immediate environment which have been associated with aggression in the past may induce children to behave more aggressively. Objects which encourage play with aggressive themes, for example, may also increase the level of aggression in general. In one study (19) groups of 5- to 8-year-old children participated in play sessions. Some of the sessions included stories, records, and toys revolving around aggressive themes such as cowboys and Indians, soldiers, and pirates, while others revolved around neutral themes such as trains, circuses, farms and stores. Children playing with aggressive toys engaged in more inappropriate aggression

unrelated to the theme of the play than children playing with neutral toys. Aggressive toys can elicit aggressive behavior.

Children are more likely to be aggressive in settings where they have been rewarded for aggression in the past. The sight of a previous victim, for example, may in itself be a sufficient stimulus for attack. Victims who have cried, given up an object, or withdrawn in the past are more likely to be attacked again (33).

Noninterference by an observing adult seems to be interpreted by young children as approval for aggressive acts (11). In one study (42), pairs of preschool boys played together during two successive sessions. When an adult passively sat and watched the boys play in the first session, the boys behaved more aggressively in the second session. Boys who played by themselves in the first session played less aggressively in the second session. The adult's passive attention apparently served to encourage aggression.

Aggressive words can provoke physical aggression. Several studies have demonstrated that children rewarded with adult attention and praise for making aggressive statements not only make more aggressive statements but also tend to engage in more physical aggression (28, 29, 31, 44, 45).

How Can Teachers Minimize Children's Aggressive Behavior?

Many different methods for dealing with aggression have been advocated by child development specialists. Research evidence clearly indicates that some of these methods have a good probability of success, while others may either fail to affect aggression at all, or may actually increase its occurrence.

One popular idea which has not been supported by the evidence is that there is an "aggressive drive" which wells up inside an individual and must be released periodically. This emotional release has been called catharsis. Advocates of this philosophy maintain that children should be allowed to "express their hostility" and

"drain their aggressive drive" by watching aggressive films, reading aggressive stories, and engaging in "harmless" types of aggressive activity (11). They believe that a child who hits other children should be encouraged to hit a pillow or doll instead; a child who kicks other children should be encouraged to kick a tree or table instead. Kicking a tree supposedly helps a child get rid of the bad feelings inside, reducing his or her "need" to kick another person.

In fact, there has been virtually no support for this approach. On the contrary many carefully controlled research studies in both laboratory and field situations indicate that encouraging any form of aggression actually increases the likelihood that more aggression will occur. While an aggressive kick against a tree may be satisfying to an angry child, the very satisfaction gained by kicking serves as a reward for an aggressive behavior which is likely to be directed toward an individual in the near future (5, 11, 20, 21, 30). Children who play aggressive games and use aggressive toys behave more aggressively towards other children (17, 19, 30). Children encouraged to use aggressive words engage in more physical aggression (31, 44, 45). Children who observe aggressive incidents or listen to stories that portray aggression behave more aggressively themselves (6, 7, 19, 23, 25, 26, 27).

The principles teachers can follow to reduce aggression in their classrooms include (1) structuring the situation to minimize conflict, (2) ensuring that the aggressive activity that does occur is not rewarded either by adult attention or by the victim's submissive response, and (3) teaching alternative methods of social interaction through modeling, reasoning, discussion and direct suggestions for socially acceptable solutions to conflicts.

Teachers can structure nonaggressive environments. -Children need sufficient space to carry on their activities without getting in each other's way. If too many children begin congregating in a small area, the teacher might redirect some of them to an alternative activity. Providing ample space helps eliminate the accidental pushing and shoving that can lead to retaliatory aggression.

Teachers can provide sufficient materials so that children will have some constructive, interesting activity easily available and will not need to compete for desired resources. Teachers can eliminate toys which will be used in play with aggressive themes, such as guns and toy soldiers. Such toys are likely to elicit nonthematic aggression (19).

Teachers can remove the rewards that children receive for aggressive acts.--- Many events can serve as rewards for aggression. The most obvious are actual objects such as a toy snatched from another child. If the victim cries or runs away, this submissive behavior can serve as a reward. Any form of adult attention can also act as a reward. It has been amply demonstrated that the teacher's attention in the classroom is a powerful force for controlling children's behavior. Rebuking or lecturing a child for an aggressive act may increase the likelihood that the same act will occur again (5, 36).

Should the teacher simply ignore all aggressive interactions in the classroom? There are two problems with this simplistic approach. In the first place, nonintervention by an adult can be interpreted as approval by young children (11, 42). In the second place, rewards for aggression are often provided by the victim (33).

Teachers can intervene without attending to the aggressor. One technique which has proved successful is to step between the children involved in the incident, ignoring the aggressor but paying attention to the victim. Attention to the victim might involve comforting an injured child, finding the victim something to play with, or suggesting to the victim ways of dealing with the aggressor in an assertive way. For example, a teacher might return a stolen toy, instruct the victim to "hold on tight" to the toy and to tell the aggressor in a loud voice, "no hitting." Such a technique takes advantage of several psychological principles simultaneously. The aggressor receives no reward for aggression and gets no direct attention from the teacher. Other children in the group observe that aggression is not a successful method of

social interaction. Therefore, they are less likely to behave aggressively themselves. The teacher's demonstration of a sympathetic response toward someone who is hurt may be imitated by other children. The victim learns to cope with difficult social situations, and has the teacher's support for practice in being assertive without responding aggressively (3, 35, 38, 43).

Teachers can defuse potentially aggressive confrontations by guiding the children in a search for an effective verbal solution to conflict or by directly suggesting a verbal alternative to an aggressive behavior. Suggestions such as "You can ask Mary to move over;" "Tell Peter, 'I'm playing with this now,'" or "You can ask Ben to trade with you," can be effective. By telling children specifically what to say in critical situations, the teacher creates opportunities to reinforce these verbal behaviors, the peer cooperation that may follow, or acceptance of "no" for an answer. Children are more likely to cooperate voluntarily with a peer who asks for something than with an aggressive peer (43, 46).

Should teachers punish aggression? Physical punishment may seem effective in the short run since it may immediately stop the undesirable behavior. In the long run, however, physical punishment may be the least effective method of controlling aggression. Any adult attention, even in the form of a rebuke, may reinforce aggressive behavior, causing it to increase. An adult using force serves as a powerful and successful model for the use of force in conflict situations and legitimizes force as a problem-solving method. Children whose parents use coercive discipline, for example, are more likely to be coercive in dealing with their peers (5). Children whose aggression is controlled by the use of punishment are more likely to be aggressive when they think the adult will not see it, especially if they feel their aggression is justified (29).

Teachers can encourage behaviors incompatible with aggression.---Aggression is a social behavior which stands out clearly, is easily imitated, and is often successful

in provoking a reaction from other people. Other types of social behavior are more subtle, and perhaps more difficult to learn. Teachers can help children learn a variety of social skills which will enable them to have successful interactions with both peers and adults.

The teacher's own behavior is a powerful influence. If the teacher demonstrates a reasoned, cooperative approach to dealing with both children and adults, children are likely to profit from the example (38).

Teachers can lead children in discussions of alternative methods of dealing with social conflicts, emphasizing the undesirable consequences of aggression. This reasoning process should not take place immediately after an aggressive incident, since such adult attention may reinforce the aggressor. Children can learn from discussions about social behavior which occur at neutral times. In one study, for example, an adult acted out alternative solutions to conflicts using a set of dolls (14). One incident involved two children who both wanted to play with the same wagon. In the aggressive solution, the two fought, the wagon broke, and both children were unhappy. The alternative involved taking turns with the wagon, which satisfied both individuals. Preschoolers who observed these little dramas and participated in discussion of the various alternatives became less aggressive and more cooperative in their play

Another group of researchers has devised a ten-week program using stories and puppets to encourage preschoolers to think up and evaluate their own alternative solutions to various interpersonal conflicts. They report that the longer children participate in the program, the fewer aggressive solutions they offer. Also, children's behavioral adjustment as rated by teachers improves as a result of children's increasing ability to think through the consequences of their actions (46).

Cooperative interaction may be incompatible with aggression. If cooperation increases, aggression may simultaneously decrease. In one nursery school class teachers were able to reduce the number of aggressive incidents and increase the amount

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of cooperation simply by ignoring all aggression and attending to children whenever they did something cooperative (12). Preschool teachers in another study paid attention only to verbal cooperative statements while ignoring aggressive statements and aggressive physical behavior. This attention did not involve praise. Teachers merely repeated the children's cooperative statements, saying "(child's name), "I heard you say (child's phrase)." The result was a dramatic increase in the number of verbal cooperative statements, an increase in the amount of actual cooperative behavior, and a corresponding decrease in the level of aggressive behavior (45).

Aggression cannot be dealt with in isolation. Any truly effective method for handling aggression must include active encouragement of cooperative and constructive social interactions.

Points to Remember

1. Children who observe other people behaving aggressively will tend to behave aggressively themselves. Aggressive models include adults, other children, and television or movie characters who display aggression. Adults using physical punishment are potent models for aggression.
2. Children rewarded for aggressive behavior are likely to continue to behave aggressively. Rewards for aggression include any form of adult attention, the submission of victims, or the attainment of objects or privileges.
3. Children encouraged to be aggressive toward inanimate objects or to play games with aggressive themes are more likely to engage in aggressive interactions with their peers.
4. The most effective methods for controlling aggression are removing rewards for aggressive acts, teaching and encouraging cooperative problem-solving methods, and providing extensive opportunity for constructive behavior.

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Chapter 4

Constructive Social Behavior: Helping, Cooperating, and Empathizing

Digest of Recommendations

Suggested Teaching Techniques	Rationale	Selected References
To encourage constructive social behavior in the classroom:		
1. Discuss the implications of children's and teacher's actions for other people's feelings.	Reasoning with an emphasis on consequences for other people is associated with the development of a humanistic concern for others.	Dlugokinski and Firestone, 1974; Feshbach, 1973; Hoffman, 1970; Spivack and Shure, 1974; Staub, 1971 a; Yarrow, Scott, and Waxler, 1973.
2. Emphasize the similarities among people.	Children tend to show empathy toward individuals similar to themselves.	Feshbach and Roe, 1968; Kagan and Madsen, 1971
3. Suggest specific ways in which children can be cooperative and helpful, and reinforce children when they follow these suggestions.	Young children may not know what to do to help or share. Children are likely to repeat a behavior they have been reinforced for. Other children may learn techniques for positive social interaction by observing children who are behaving cooperatively.	Altman, 1971; Cooper and LeBlanc, 1973; Doland and Adelberg, 1967; Hart, Reynolds, Baer, Brawley, and Harris, 1968; Hartup and Coates, 1967

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Suggested Teaching Techniques	Rationale	Selected References
4. Set up situations where children are likely to cooperate and help each other. Assign responsibility to children.. Set up group projects. Offer group incentives.. Provide equipment which requires use by more than one child.	Children are likely to cooperate and help each other under these conditions. The more frequently children voluntarily practice positive social skills, the more likely they are to use these skills in less structured situations.	Azrin and Lindsley, 1956; Cooper and LeBlanc 1973; Kagan and Madsen, 1971; Krumboltz and Krumboltz, 1972; Nelson and Madsen, 1969; Rosenhan, 1969 a and b, 1972; Staub, 1970, 1971 a and b; Stendler, Damrin, and Haines, 1951.
5. Attend to children who are cooperating, sharing, and helping. Attend to children who are saying cooperative, helpful things to each other. Simultaneously ignore negative social interactions.	Children are likely to use behaviors they have been reinforced for. Children are likely to imitate behaviors they see other children reinforced for. Children given attention for cooperative verbal interactions are likely to behave cooperatively.	Altman, 1971; Cooper and LeBlanc, 1973; Harris, Wolf, and Baer, 1967; Hart, et al., 1968; Slaby, 1975; Slaby and Crowley, 1975.

Suggested Teaching Techniques	Rationale	Selected References
6. Avoide lecturing to children when they are not sharing or cooperating.	Lecturing is often ineffective, and the attention it provides may cause uncooperative behavior to increase.	Harris, Wolf, and Baer, 1967; Rosenhan, 1969 a and b, 1972.
7. Provide examples of sharing, helping, and cooperating.	Children are likely to help and share when they have seen someone else do it, particularly if they know and like the model.	Bryan and London, 1970; Bryan and Walbek, 1970 a and b; Midlarsky, Bryan, and Brickman, 1973; Presbie and Coiteux, 1971; Rosenhan, 1969 a and b, 1972; Staub, 1971 a; Yarrow, Scott, and Waxler, 1973.

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What Are the Prerequisites for Constructive Social Behavior?

Although adults often complain about children's nonconstructive behavior, the fact remains that children do show a great deal of concern for each other, and they do learn to interact in constructive ways. Children do not just "naturally" become altruistic and helpful, however. A simple act such as helping another person pick up a fallen stack of papers involves a complex interaction of ideas, emotions, and behaviors which must be developed.

To become helpful, children must first understand that other people have feelings and needs different from their own. They must understand that their own actions can have an effect on other people. They must learn the skills necessary to carry out actions that have positive consequences for others. They must care enough about other people to feel good about having helped, shared, or cooperated. If Alice falls off her tricycle and is hurt, Peter is most likely to help her if he understands that she is hurt, feels concerned about it himself, and knows that helping her up will make both of them feel better (2, 16, 29, 46, 47, 48, 55).

With an understanding of the processes involved, teachers can foster the child's growing understanding of the feelings and needs of others; teach some of the skills necessary for positive social interaction; and set up situations in which growing understanding and increasing skills are most likely to be used.

How Do Children Come To Understand Other People's Feelings?

Even very young children have a surprising capacity for understanding how other people feel. Three-year-olds, for example, can predict with great accuracy that people will feel happy in pleasant situations. As they get older, children improve in their ability to differentiate unpleasant types of emotional reactions such as fear sadness, and anger. Older children's generally increasing ability to go beyond their own outlook and consider situations from many different points of view enables them to put themselves in another's place more easily (4, 5, 6, 11, 50, 51).

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Teachers can encourage children's naturally improving tendency to empathize with others. Discussions in which different emotions are identified and labeled can help children understand their own feelings as well as those of other people. In one training program for preschoolers teachers use stories and puppets to act out situations in which emotional changes occur for the main characters. Children are encouraged to identify emotions in the context of the story, using observable behaviors as a guide. They learn, for example, that a girl becomes sad after falling off a bike. They can tell that she is sad because they can see and hear her cry (55).

Pointing out how children's behavior may have positive or negative consequences for others focuses children's attention on the special effects of their actions. "I'll bet John is glad that you gave him part of your snack," might be an appropriate comment. In addition, teachers can use their own helping behavior as a concrete demonstration of the principle of showing concern for others. A teacher might comment, for example, "Jim was unhappy because he fell off the swing and hurt himself. But we helped him up and he feels better now." (13, 16, 17, 29, 55).

Teachers can encourage children to discuss their own feelings with one another. Teachers can verbalize their own feelings as well. They might say, for example, "I was glad that you helped pick up the papers:" It makes me nervous when you talk so loudly;" "I get angry when you leave papers lying around" (13, 55, 58, 65).

Discussing the similarities underlying the differences among people can also facilitate children's empathic responses. Research indicates that children respond with greater empathy to individuals they consider to be similar to themselves. Girls, for instance, show more empathy toward girls, and boys show more empathy toward boys. For a very young child, similarity may be emphasized in an immediate and concrete way, by saying, for example, "Peter and Mary and Ellen and Jim all enjoy playing on the swings, just like you do." For older children, the abstract concept of "other people" can be effectively used in discussions. The teacher can show how children in other

countries live in families, play, get upset, and have experiences in common with all children. Children may be better able to appreciate cultural and individual differences when they understand that all people share certain basic human characteristics (18, 30, 31).

How Do Children Learn Positive Social Skills?

Understanding other people's feelings is one thing; acting on that understanding is another. Suppose Andy tumbles from a play ladder, gets hurt, and begins to cry. Dick sees him fall, understands that he is unhappy and wants to help. What does Dick do? If Dick is a very young child, he may be at a complete loss and either do nothing or start to cry himself in frustration and sympathy. If Dick is somewhat more mature, he may take his own mother to the hurt child, reasoning that when he himself is hurt, his own mother is the most comforting person. If Dick is even more mature, he may either go himself to comfort the injured child or find an adult preferred by Andy. In this case, Dick realizes that Andy's needs are different from his own, and has a better understanding of how to help. If the fall was a bad one, an older child may even ask Andy how he's feeling at a later time. He will be able to think of Andy's fall outside of the immediate context. Knowing what to do in a given situation involving other people requires both understanding the real needs of others and skill in knowing what to do in any given situation (30).

Children learn skills of helping, sharing, and cooperating through adult guidance and positive reinforcement, through interacting with other children and working out problems on their own, and through observing adults and other children behaving in socially constructive ways. Young children inexperienced in handling group interactions must learn even the most basic skills. It may never occur to them, for example, to take turns or divide possessions with another child. Merely exhorting children to share does no good when they don't know what actual behaviors are involved.

in sharing. One effective technique for increasing cooperative behavior is to suggest a specific cooperative behavior and reward the child (merely a smile will do in many cases) for following the suggestion. Two children both want to play with a prized gold car, for instance. The teacher can suggest that Ellen use it for 5 minutes (or when the big hand on the clock reaches 3) and then John can use it for 5 minutes. The teacher can then reinforce their sharing by smiling or bringing additional toys to the children (12, 14, 26).

The two children in the above example have learned a social technique which will enable both of them to use a toy without fighting over it. In addition, other children in the group have observed peers taking turns and have seen that the teacher rewards such behavior. Children learn what to do and what to say in these situations by watching other children and by watching teachers (27, 52).

Under What Conditions Will Children Use Positive Social Behaviors?

Once children have acquired both an understanding of other people's needs and a variety of constructive social skills, they still must learn to act on empathic understanding by using their skills. Teachers can increase the likelihood that positive social behaviors will occur by the way they structure the physical and social environment in their classrooms.

Teachers can set up situations to encourage constructive social behavior.---For example, Tom, Emily, and Susan may be engrossed in painting their own pictures. "Look at what I did," is a likely comment. In this case, the children gain experience working together, the group as a whole participates in the reward of a finished product, and the teacher has an opportunity to attend to cooperative behaviors. The structure of the situation influences the amount of cooperation which occurs. Children tend to behave more cooperatively after participating in situations where they have shared a group reward, operated with a group ("we") orientation, or

received reinforcement for cooperative behavior (1, 12, 31, 41, 61).

The more opportunities children have to practice voluntarily helping, sharing, or cooperative behaviors the more likely they are to use those behaviors in other situations. In several studies, it was found that when children observed a model donating candy or money to charity and then voluntarily donated themselves, they were likely to donate a second time when they were left alone. Children who had been told to donate, on the other hand, complied while the adult was in the room, but generally did not donate when they were left alone (46, 47, 48, 49). By participating in situations where helping or cooperating is obviously called for, children can practice constructive social behavior they have initiated on their own. They will then be more likely to use these well-practiced skills in less structured situations even without the presence of an adult.

In addition to setting up group projects, teachers can provide equipment which can only be operated by more than one individual. Such items as teeter-totters and rocking boats require that children work together for maximum enjoyment (12).

Teachers can offer group incentives to children for completing individual tasks, while at the same time giving permission for children to help each other. A teacher might say, "If everyone in the class can do these problems correctly, we can have an extra 15 minutes of recess. You can work together." Following such statements, it is important for the teacher to allow the conversation and bustling about that occurs as the children help each other complete the task (33, 41).

Assigning responsibility to children also encourages them to be helpful on their own initiative. Cross-cultural studies have found that children are generally more helpful in cultures where they are regularly given responsible tasks such as taking care of younger siblings. Within our culture, it has been demonstrated that children are more likely to investigate sounds of distress in another room if they are specifically left in charge of the situation than if they are not specifically given such responsibility (56, 59).

Teachers can reinforce prosocial behavior.--When teachers attend to specific instances of cooperation, sharing, and helping, children are more likely to continue engaging in positive interactions, especially if teachers simultaneously ignore instances of negative social interaction (12, 23, 26). It requires some finesse, however, to provide positive reinforcement without disrupting children's interactions and turning them into several separate child/adult conversations. The teacher can stroll past a group of children and smile pleasantly, or make a brief comment such as, "You make such nice things when you work together." The teacher can then move on, forestalling prolonged interaction. Teachers might also bring additional materials to groups of children who are cooperating or sharing well. Children playing house, for example, might be able to use additional dishes, blankets, and pillows. Small cars could add to the excitement of building a block garage together. The addition of extra materials not only reinforces the cooperative interaction, but also helps to prolong the play by giving it a new twist (62).

Rewarding children for cooperating in one situation may result in increased cooperation in other situations. In one study, pairs of children learned to cooperate in pulling levers to make a machine deliver candy. These children also increased their friendly cooperative interactions during free play sessions in preschool, where no specific rewards were presented (1).

If children are encouraged to <u>say</u> nice things to each other, they are more likely to do nice things for each other as well. Teachers in one preschool attended to cooperative speech by saying, "(child's name), I heard you say, (child's phrase)." Even though teachers were able to attend to only 15 percent of the cooperative verbalizations that occurred, both the number of cooperative things children said to each other and the number of times they actually behaved cooperatively increased (54). A similar effect has been found for older children in a laboratory situation (53).

The amount of positive attention required to maintain a desirable level of cooperative interaction will vary with the particular children in each classroom. Children just beginning to learn positive social skills may require a great deal of adult support. As children become more proficient in dealing with social situations, their positive interactions with peers will become more rewarding, and the teacher intervention may be reduced to an occasional smile, wink, or nod.

The use of positive attention to encourage prosocial behavior can have a snowballing effect. As children observe others being rewarded for cooperating, they are more likely to be cooperative themselves. Interacting without conflict and receiving positive attention from the teacher combine to make children feel happy and good about themselves. Children are most likely to share and cooperate when they are in a good mood (39, 48, 60).

Teachers can provide a good example themselves.--Children are more likely to help someone or share possessions when they have seen someone else do it first. Suppose Jason is holding tightly to all the blocks in the basket. "You can't have any," he shouts at Peter. The teacher rushes over to the children, and delivers a lecture on the importance of sharing. Unfortunately, this is <u>not</u> an effective technique. In fact, even if Jason finally shares under the stern eye of the teacher, it is not likely that he will share in the future. The teacher has given him attention for not sharing, which may tend to increase his tendency to be selfish (23). While the teacher may succeed in forcing Jason to share in this situation, it has been shown that requiring children to share does not result in more sharing behavior at other times (46, 47). A more effective technique might be to say to Peter, "Come on, let's find some blocks for you." (nonattention to Jason). Together, the teacher and Peter can then locate some blocks to share with one another (demonstration of the desired behavior.

The importance of providing children with a behavioral example of the desired behavior has been demonstrated in several studies. Children were told that "poor orphans" need some of their candy, money, or other prizes which the children had previously won in a game. An adult delivered a lecture on the importance of giving to others. In some cases the adult also gave something to the poor children; in other cases the adult did not donate. The children who were most likely to donate were those who observed an adult donating. The adult's preaching did not affect the children's donations. If the adult gave, the children gave. If the adult did not give, the children did not give either, no matter how eloquently the adult advocated sharing (8, 9, 10, 24, 44, 46, 47).

An adult's own behavior can also influence that adult's credibility in children's eyes. In one study, when children were praised for their own altruistic behavior by an adult who gave nothing, children were less likely to donate later. When a selfish person rewards children's atruism, the reward may backfire (38).

Teachers can become more effective models by getting involved in a warm relationship with children. Helping children, listening to them, talking with them, and following their suggestions are just some of the ways teachers become important individuals in children's lives. In one study with preschoolers, adults spent several weeks building such a relationship with children before systematically demonstrating helping behavior in a variety of settings. In these demonstrations, adults used pictures and props to portray situations in which individuals needed help. The adults explained what they would do, for example, to "help the monkey get the banana he can't reach." In addition, live examples of helping behavior were used. One adult would act concerned when another's head was bumped. An adult would help a kitten find its hidden food. In each case, the models described their own actions and used the word "help." Children who observed models they already knew and liked were themselves more helpful to others than children who observed models with whom they had

no previous relationship. The children continued to demonstrate their helpfulness in "real life" situations even several weeks after the experiment. For example, they were more likely to pick up toys a baby had dropped outside of the playpen. The research shows that even a relatively short-term relationship enables demonstrations of helpfulness to have a lasting effect on children's willingness to be helpful.(65).

Points to Remember

1. Children's ability to understand other people's feelings improves as they grow older. The development of empathy is facilitated by discussions which emphasize (a) other people's needs and feelings, (b) consequences to others of the child's actions, and (c) the similarities between the child and other individuals..
2. Children learn the skills involved in being helpful and cooperative (a) by watching other people, (b) by interacting with other children and working out problems on their own or with adult guidance, and (c) by following direct suggestions made by teachers.
3. Children are more likely to practice their positive social skills when (a) they are working on group projects with a "we" orientation, (b) they are given personal responsibility, (c) they are happy, (d) they observe people they know and like displaying prosocial behavior, and (e) they have been reinforced for behaving and speaking cooperatively.

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Chapter 5

Moral Judgment and Good Behavior

Digest of Recommendations

Suggested Teaching Technique	Rationale	Selected References
To encourage good behavior in in the classroom and facilitate the development of internalized humanitarian standards:		
1. Engage children in discussions of moral conflicts and interpersonal confrontations. Encourage children to devise alternative solutions to social conflicts and to think through the consequences of proposed solutions.	Children who participate in discussions about moral dilemmas tend to make more mature moral judgments and may learn to solve their own interpersonal conflicts in mature, socially acceptable ways.	Jensen and Hughston, 1971; Jensen and Larm, 1970; Spivack and Shure, 1974.
2. Attend to children who are behaving well. Use a form of attention the individual child finds pleasant.	Children tend to repeat behaviors that have been reinforced by teacher attention. Children observing the situation are likely to imitate behavior that has been reinforced. Children may also imitate the teacher's demonstrations of friendly, helpful behaviors.	Bandura and Walters, 1963; Becker, Madsen, Arnold, and Thomas, 1967; Harris, Wolf, and Baer, 1967; Risley and Baer, 1973; Scott, Burton, and Yarrow, 1967; Thomas, Becker, and Armstrong, 1968; Ward and Baker, 1968.

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Suggested Teaching Technique	Rationale	Selected References
3. Pointedly ignore misbehavior whenever possible by turning away from the misbehaving child and attending to a child who is behaving appropriately.	Ignored behavior may increase at first, but eventually it is likely to decrease if the child does not receive reinforcement from other sources.	Bandura and Walters, 1963; Becker, Madsen, Arnold, and Thomas, 1967; Harris, Wolf, and Baer, 1967; Risley and Baer, 1973; Scott, Burton, and Yarrow, 1967; Thomas, Becker, and Armstrong, 1968; Ward and Baker, 1968.
4. Supplement contingent teacher attention with material rewards or special privileges when necessary. Rewards which occur naturally in the classroom, such as free time and use of special materials, are particularly effective.	Material rewards can be effective reinforcers if used sparingly.	Bijou, 1960; Risley and Baer, 1973; Winett and Winkler, 1972.

Suggested Teaching Technique	Rationale	Selected References
5. Formulate clearly stated contingencies which inform children in advance of the consequences of their actions. Say, for example, "When you put your truck away, then you can play with the blocks;" "If you throw the play dough again, then you will have to leave the table." Follow through and administer the stated contingencies if necessary.	Under these conditions, the child assumes responsibility for complying or not. The teacher need not force compliance. Well-chosen consequences increase the child's motivation to comply. The teacher can then reinforce the child's voluntary cooperation. Children are more likely to internalize rules when they have complied following a mild threat or incentive than when they have complied following a severe threat.	Aronson and Carlsmith, 1963; Freedman, 1965; Lepper, 1973; Miller, Holt, and LeBlanc, 1972; Pepitone, McCauley, and Hammond, 1967; Slaby, 1974; Turner and Wright, 1963; Walters and Parke, 1967.
6. Avoid repeated warnings of punishment or nagging.	Long-winded statements constitute a form of teacher attention which may reinforce undesirable behavior. Threats quickly become ineffective when they are not consistently followed by teacher action.	Harris, Wolf, and Baer, 1967; Slaby, 1974.

Suggested Teaching Technique	Rationale	Selected References
7. When stating negative contingencies, choose mild punishments related to the act which can follow misbehavior immediately, such as removing a misused toy.	Consistent, immediate punishment may tend to discourage the behavior it follows.	Cheyne, 1971; Parke, 1969, 1970; Walters and Parke, 1967.
8. In situations where children have no choice, state the required behavior simply and firmly. Avoid using rhetorical questions. Follow through on commands with physical aid if necessary.	Children are more likely to follow positively stated commands when they know the teacher will follow through.	Miller, Holt, and LeBlanc, 1972; Slaby, 1974.
9. Formulate a few, clear, reasonable rules. Discuss the reasoning behind rules when children are following the rules, and not when the rules are disobeyed.	Children are more likely to obey rules they consider reasonable. Reasoning can increase children's awareness of other people's needs. Reasoning is a form of attention which should be limited to occasions when children are behaving appropriately.	Cheyne and Walters, 1969; Hoffman, 1970; LaVoie, 1974 a and b; Leizer and Rogers, 1974; O'Leary and Drabman, 1974; Parke, 1969.

What Does It Mean To "Be Good?"

"Johnny's such a good boy," say his teachers. What do they mean? They might mean that Johnny sits quietly all day in class and never causes any trouble. They might mean that Johnny is helpful and obedient, and that he always does the "right thing." They might mean something totally different from the teachers Johnny had last year or from his parents.

Johnny must make sense out of the differing definitions of right and wrong propounded by the many adults and peers in his social environment. He must also come to some conclusion on his own and learn the behaviors which will enable him to follow his principles. Johnny's teacher will try to influence him to behave according to the standards in force in that teacher's classroom. Conscientious teachers will also be concerned with fostering Johnny's overall growth as an individual with strong, internalized, humanitarian standards who behaves rationally in accordance with his principles.

The teacher's job is a difficult one. Teachers do not control all the factors operating on Johnny or his classmates. An understanding of how experiences influence children's behavior and moral orientations can help teachers plan effective strategies, but such strategies will not be effective 100 percent of the time. There may be some children, in fact, whose problems are so great that outside professional help will be needed to cope with their difficulties. Nevertheless, through flexible adaptation of principles discussed in this chapter, teachers can positively influence children's behavior more often than not.

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How Do Children Decide What Is Right And Wrong?

For very young children, morality is determined by what adults around them permit and do not permit. Preschoolers are likely to believe that rules are absolute and inflexible, like the physical laws of nature. Limited by their general inability to view situations from points of view other than their own (referred to as egocentrism), young children assume that everyone holds the same definitions of right and wrong. They have difficulty inferring other people's intentions, and they tend to judge an act according to its objective consequences. An action will be viewed as bad if it does not conform to a rule, if it causes damage, or if it is punished. Young children will say, for instance, that a boy who accidentally breaks 15 cups as he opens a door is naughtier than a boy who breaks one cup while trying to steal jam from the cupboard. At the same time, young children can perceive their own inner states, and they expect everyone to understand their own innocent intentions. A 3-year-old, for example, who accidentally breaks a glass may deny responsibility for the act (38, 69).

As children gain maturity and experience, they begin to judge actions on the basis of internalized standards of right and wrong. They become less concerned with whether their actions will be discovered and punished and more concerned with following their own principles. It becomes easier for children to take into account the intentions of other people, to understand that rules are designed for a specific purpose, and to realize that rules can be changed according to the needs of the group (2, 19, 31, 35, 38, 40, 46, 48, 55, 69, 74).

While children's ideas about right and wrong tend to remain stable across situations and to change gradually with age and experience, their behavior varies from situation to situation. Children are not uniformly "honest" or "dishonest," for example. Children who will cheat in one situation may not cheat in another, depending on opportunities, pressures to achieve, sanctions, and peer pressure (16, 34, 58, 78).

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What Experiences Influence the Development of Children's Moral Judgments?

Children's experiences with their peers and with adults can either facilitate or impede the development of their ability to make independent moral judgments on the basis of internalized standards. Evidence suggests that children who participate in group discussions of moral conflicts can learn to make more mature judgments (41,42). Children tend to imitate the moral reasoning of respected models (8). As children engage in reciprocal role-taking experiences with peers, they tend to become less egocentric and better able to take into account the intentions behind other people's actions (38, 69, 79).

Disciplinary techniques can affect children's moral orientation.--"The rule is no talking in the classroom. Now, I don't want to hear another word out of any of you," announces the teacher. Amy says something to her neighbor, and the teacher sends her out into the hall as punishment. This is an example of a power-assertive disciplinary technique. The rule is arbitrary; the enforcement is based on the teacher's power over the children. The children's attention is focused on the consequences imposed on them by external authority. Evidence indicates that consistent exposure to this sort of disciplinary approach is associated with slower development of an internal moral orientation, less resistance to temptation, less of a tendency to feel guilty when doing wrong, and less willingness to confess and accept blame. When rules are presented in this way, children are less likely to internalize them. They tend to follow such rules from fear of punishment rather than because they believe the rule is "right" (38, 39).

"When people are working hard on their projects, it bothers them when other people talk and make noise. Let's see how quiet we can be so that we won't bother each other. If you are quiet, I'll be able to help each of you with your work." Having stated this reasonable rule, pointing out the consequences for other people

of the children's actions, the teacher then moves around to the desks of children who are working quietly, helping them with their work and at the same time reinforcing their quiet activity. Noisy children are ignored. This is an example of an inductive disciplinary technique combined with positive reinforcement. The teacher has given a reason for the rule, has explained the benefits of quiet and the bad effects of noise, and has appealed to the children's own sense of mastery to accomplish the goal of peace in the classroom. The children's attention is focused on the consequences to others of their actions and their own responsibility for observing the rule. A clever teacher will change the children's activity before the children become bored and noisy. The teacher can then compliment the class on their ability to remain quiet. Next time, the quiet period might last a little longer.

Consistent exposure to inductive discipline is associated with the development of an internal moral orientation combined with concern for others, a tendency to feel guilty when doing wrong, an increased ability to resist temptation, and an increased likelihood of confessing and accepting blame after transgressing. When rules are presented in this way, children are more likely to internalize them. They begin to understand that rules, in general, are not set up in an arbitrary fashion, but arise from the necessities of a particular situation. They begin to take responsibility for their own actions and to follow rules because they believe they are "right." They also begin to formulate a general definition of "right" based on concern for others rather than on concern for consequences to themselves (38, 39, 51).

What Are The Effects And Limits Of Punishment Techniques?

Punishment in this chapter refers to consequences following a child's behavior which are intended to reduce the occurrence of the behavior, and not primarily to "get back at" the child in a retaliatory sense. The effectiveness of punishment is

determined by whether the particular behavior is actually suppressed, and not whether the child has been adequately "paid back."

Severity of punishment in psychological studies is usually determined by the loudness of a tone used to signal the child that a behavior is wrong, or the harshness of the experimenter's verbal rebuke. Severe punishment in this sense does not refer to any type of physical punishment. Since ethics prohibit using physical punishment in psychological laboratories, controlled studies of this type of punishment have not been done. Data on physical punishment are limited to correlational studies of extended use of this technique by parents. The data indicate that parents who use physical punishment tend to have children who show high levels of aggressive behavior (11, 91).

What are the effects of punishment?--Laboratory experiments indicate that children can be induced to obey an arbitrary rule for a short period of time if an extremely loud noise or a harsh rebuke immediately follows any diviation from the rule. Giving a reason for the rule, however, makes milder, less immediate punishments equally effective. In fact, often a good reason can be effective with no punishment at all (20, 54, 64, 65, 91).

All teachers know, however, that some children will occasionally disobey even the best reasoned rule. In the interest of maintaining firm control of the class, punishment may occasionally be not only necessary but also desirable. In such cases, punishment which is immediate, related to the act in some way, and just severe enough to enforce obedience will probably be the most effective in the long run. Teachers can remove a toy misused by a child, for instance, or they can remove a child from a group where that child is causing trouble.

If children are aware that a mild punishment will consistently follow misbehavior, they are less likely to engage in that behavior. Several studies have

indicated that when children obey a rule following a mild threat of punishment (or under a mild incentive), they are more likely to continue to obey the rule than if they were threatened with a severe punishment (or promised a large reward) (5, 25, 67, 88). In one study, an adult suggested in a mild tone that he might be upset if the children touched a particular toy. Those children who obeyed following this mild threat not only refrained from touching the same toy weeks later when no adult was present, but also cheated less on a game which they could win only by falsifying their scores. On the other hand, those children who obeyed following a severe threat (the adult threatened to become angry and take all the toys home) did not continue to follow the rule at a later time. Although the severe threat induced children to obey the rule in the immediate situation, the children did not internalize standards of good behavior (53).

What are the limits of punishment techniques?--"Sit down, Tom," says the teacher. Is this verbal rebuke an example of a mild punishment which can induce children to stay in their seats? Teachers need to observe the long-term effects of their management techniques very carefully to be sure that what they consider "punishment" does not backfire. In one study conducted in a first-grade classroom it was found that although telling a child to "sit down" usually had the immediate effect of getting that particular child back in his or her seat, the more frequently teachers told children to "sit down," the more frequently children in the classroom tended to stand up. However, when the same teachers concentrated on praising children who stayed in their seats and ignoring occasions of standing up, the number of times children stood up decreased dramatically (56).

In the above instance the reinforcing effects of teacher attention apparently outweighed any suppressive effects of verbal rebuke. Many studies have demonstrated that in a group of children, where teacher attention is at a premium, behavior that

is attended to in any way by the teacher is likely to increase. In administering what they believe to be punishment, teachers must take care that in the long run they are not actually increasing the behavior they wish to discourage (33, 71).

In addition to the effects of attention, teachers must constantly be aware of the example they are setting for children's behavior. In one study, adults used rewarding or punishing techniques to teach a game to 6-to 8-year-old children. When these children were asked to teach the game to another child, they imitated the punishing or rewarding behavior of their own adult teacher (26). Teachers who don't want children to develop coercive, punishing interaction patterns should be wary of employing such techniques themselves (38). The adult who uses physical punishment, in particular, provides a model for aggressive behavior which may be imitated by children (11).

"You can't play with the blocks if you throw them," states the teacher, and removes Jane from the block area. The teacher has swiftly administered a mild, transgression-related punishment, which may discourage block-throwing. Common to all techniques which focus on the child's misbehavior, however, this incident tells the child nothing about what she can do with blocks. Her attention is focused on the act of throwing, and on the consequences to herself. The very next time Jane goes to the block area, the teacher should be right there, commenting on Jane's and other children's appropriate block playing skills, and perhaps demonstrating the use of blocks. While praising the children for their constructive play, the teacher might take the opportunity to discuss the dangers of block throwing. Punishment by itself may suppress an undesirable behavior, but it will be ineffective in the long run if the teacher does not take the opportunity to teach and reinforce alternative, desirable behaviors (38, 91).

How Can Teachers Use Positive Approaches to Behavior Management?

Much has been said about the powerful effects of teacher attention and positive reinforcement in the classroom. "If the teacher will only attend to the child's good behavior, good behavior will increase," goes the usual argument. Attending to good behavior is not a simple task, however. While misbehaving children are excellent attention-getters, children involved in constructive, cooperative activities are less likely to be noticed. To be effective, a teacher must have in mind specific examples of "good behavior" to look for, must be observant, and must know what kinds of attention are reinforcing for each child.

What is positive reinforcement?--Positive reinforcement is any event which leads children to repeat the activity they were engaged in before that event occurred. The trick is that different events are reinforcing for different children. The only way a teacher can be sure of having a reinforcing effect on a child is to watch and see what that child does after the teacher responds to the child in some way.

For example, a teacher approaches John, who is using play dough. The teacher looks him directly in the eye and says, "John, you certainly made an interesting shape with that play dough." If John smiles and eagerly continues to make new and different play dough shapes, the teacher can infer that this form of attention has encouraged him in his activity. If, on the other hand, John looks away and begins to suck his thumb, the teacher might infer that this approach was not reinforcing for John. Perhaps John is a shy child. Direct eye contact and the use of his name may demand a level of participation that makes him uncomfortable. Perhaps John has not experienced enough pleasant interactions with his teacher to allow him to feel comfortable in a direct confrontation. In any event, it is only by careful observation of John that the teacher can decide what forms of attention are positive

reinforcers for him (87).

Teachers can show attention to a child in a variety of ways, both verbal and nonverbal. The following examples are adapted from Carolyn Thomson's Skills for Young Children, 1972, pp. 20-21.

Some nonverbal forms of attention include:

1. watching the child
2. nodding, raising eye-brow, winking
3. facial gestures (smiling, faking surprise, etc.)
4. establishing eye contact
5. making physical contact (holding hands, arm around shoulder, patting, holding child on lap)
6. remaining in close proximity to the child
7. waiting for the child to finish an activity so he or she may be included in the next event
8. assisting the child with tasks the child finds unpleasant or difficult
9. handing the child attractive materials
10. participating with the child in an activity (building blocks, carrying boards together, setting up equipment)
11. laughing with the child at appropriate times
12. complying with a child's request
13. listening to a child and not allowing this conversation to be interrupted

Verbal forms of attention include the many types of conversations that can occur between children and adults, such as:

1. small talk (nondirective general conversation)
2. suggestions to facilitate the child's involvement and participation
3. challenges, dares

4. praise and approval
5. questions and requests
6. directive statements
7. encouragement of a child's participation in making appropriate decisions
8. expressions of honest affection
9. comments related to the child, the child's activity, or the children the child is interacting with
10. expressions of humor that children can appreciate
11. invitations to participate in attractive activities

It is obvious from the variety of responses listed above that to provide positive attention a teacher does not have to constantly make gushing statements such as "My, what a lovely painting." A creative teacher will discover forms of attention which feel natural and are appropriate for each child in the class. Attention will be most meaningful to children who already have a friendly relationship with the teacher and who value that teacher's attention and opinions. In fact, the attention of a disliked teacher may have a negative effect on a child's behavior. Teachers become important to children by being helpful, friendly, and generally supportive.

There are some children who do not respond to teacher attention. For such children, material rewards may be appropriate for initially strengthening desirable behaviors while building a positive relationship with a teacher. There are many rewards which occur naturally in the classroom, such as free time, opportunities to engage in activities the child enjoys, and use of special materials. Such rewards can be used to supplement teacher attention. A material reward may be most effective when it is related to the activity the child is engaged in -- special gold paint for a child working industriously on an art project, for example (14, 27, 94).

Broad-based token reward programs used in the classroom have been shown to be successful while they were in effect, but often the effects did not generalize to other times and other situations. Token reward programs for specific children or groups of children may be desirable in some cases, and with careful planning the effects can be maintained as rewards are diminished. The procedures involved are not as simple as they sound, however, and any teacher considering implementation of a broad-based token reward program should consult with a psychologist trained in behavior modification procedures (14, 59, 60).

What are the effects of using positive reinforcement?--Positive attention becomes maximally effective when teachers consistently attend to those children who are behaving appropriately and at the same time pointedly ignore children who are mildly disruptive or just unoccupied. This approach is not artificial or mechanical. In many instances, a teacher can look around the room and choose between criticizing a child who is "fooling around" or helping a child who is industriously working on a project. The more times the teacher chooses to give attention to the child who is working, cooperating, or playing well, the more frequently good behavior will occur. When this technique is used consistently, most disruptive behavior will decrease. Consequently, the teacher will have more time to devote to positive teaching activities (32, 71).

In general, behaviors which receive attention are likely to increase, while ignored behaviors are likely to decrease. If a child is accustomed to receiving some attention for disruptive behavior, however, that behavior may initially increase in rate when teachers begin to ignore it. If teachers can hold their ground, the behavior may eventually decrease if it receives no reinforcement from other sources and if alternative "good behaviors" are simultaneously reinforced. (12, 86, 93).

Consistent use of contingent positive attention works in the classroom for several reasons. First, the particular child reinforced for good behavior is likely to engage in that behavior again (71). Children observing the situation may notice the child being rewarded for behaving well. Children are more likely to imitate behavior which has been rewarded (11). The teacher provides a model for helpful, cooperative behavior. Evidence from several classrooms indicates that children often use a teachers' techniques of positive reinforcement in their own social encounters (26, 77). Acting in a friendly, helpful manner increases the teacher's effectiveness as a model. Children are more likely to imitate positive, nurturant adults than punishing adults (6, 70).

Are there limits to the use of positive reinforcement in the classroom?--"I've tried positive reinforcement, and it doesn't work," is a familiar complaint. There are many reasons why a particular teacher's attempt to use positive reinforcement may prove ineffective.

The teacher's standards may be beyond the child's capacity to perform. In this case, the answer is to "think small," and gradually work up to the performance required. For example, a very active child may find it extremely difficult to sit still for 10 minutes. The teacher could praise such a child for 1 or 2 minutes of quiet concentration. The next time, the teacher might wait a little longer before remarking that, for example, "Ben is sitting so quietly I think it is his turn to pass the snack basket." (33, 47, 71)

If a child rarely performs a behavior the teacher wishes to reinforce, merely waiting for the behavior to occur spontaneously may prove inefficient. The teacher can structure situations where the behavior is likely to occur. Specific suggestions and demonstrations can also induce the child to perform the desired behavior. Children reinforced frequently for behaviors prompted by the teacher are likely to

begin performing those behaviors spontaneously (33, 47, 71).

Some responses a teacher considers "reinforcing" may not be rewarding for particular children. The teacher may need to experiment with different forms of attention. Children can become over-exposed to a particular type of teacher attention, so that it becomes meaningless and loses its effect. Children get tired of hearing "that's very good" every time they do something. A teacher must be creative and spontaneous in adapting approval and support to the individual child. Sometimes just a description of what the child is doing may be more effective than a value judgment. "John and Mary are building a house together. Look, they have used long blocks for a roof," is more meaningful than "I like that house" (47, 87).

In addition, there are times when children must do certain things they would rather not do. Many situations require firmness, with consequences for misbehavior. The teacher does not have control of all possible reinforcements in any situation. Running around the room and yelling may continue no matter how long the teacher ignores such behavior because the child enjoys doing it or because attention from other children provides sufficient reinforcement. Children are likely to imitate the misbehavior of their peers, particularly if that misbehavior goes unchecked (11, 72, 73). In short, while positive attention to children's good behavior is a powerful and effective tool, it is not the complete answer to managing classroom behavior.

How Can Teachers Combine Management Techniques Effectively?

Teachers attempting to change the emphasis in their current management practices may find it extremely difficult at first. Children will test the limits of a new regime. It takes time for the consistent use of any management technique to have a noticeable effect. Reinforcing a child once for good behavior will not

magically change the climate of the classroom. A supportive observer may be able to notice patterns of interaction in the classroom which the overburdened teacher misses. The observer may be able to suggest possible alternative procedures.

The teacher can set up contingencies--Both positive and negative contingencies declared clearly in advance can be effective both for groups and for individual children (57). In one elementary classroom, for example, preferred activities such as handling the class guinea pig, playing with games, and going out to recess were allowed only when other work had been completed and the room had been cleaned and straightened. Negative contingencies were also in effect. For example, if the game area was not left in a neat condition, the area was off limits for a portion of the day.

Specific contingencies for individual children often facilitate day-to-day interactions. Teachers can use statements such as "When you sit down, then you can play with something else;" When you ask quietly, then I'll put the record on." Hearing this "when-then" statement, children understand that a particular behavior is necessary before they can have or do something they really want. The child assumes responsibility for deciding whether to comply with the request or to do without the reward. The teacher is not put in the position of having to force compliance. If the child does not perform the stated behavior, it is important for the adult to follow through and see that the child does not receive the reward. Well chosen reward consequences greatly increase the child's motivation to comply. The child's compliance provides the teacher with an opportunity to reward and praise the behavior (81, 91).

The use of negative contingencies can be an effective means of stopping particular behaviors. Negative contingencies are best applied to behaviors that can be allowed to reoccur if the child decides to ignore the contingency. In this

instance, the child is made aware that a particular behavior will result in a specific punishment. The punishment is most effective if it is related to the undesirable behavior. For example, the teacher can say "If you throw the play dough again, then you will have to leave the table;" "If you crash the bike again, then you will have to get off the bike;" "If you throw sand out of the sandbox again, then you will have to get out of the sandbox." Repeated warnings of punishment should be avoided since they may serve as reinforcing attention. Threats quickly become ineffective when they are not consistently followed by immediate teacher action. Once the child knows the rule, the negative consequence should immediately follow misbehavior. It is crucial for the teacher to follow through and administer the punishment threatened if the child continues to misbehave. If the child refrains from performing the undesirable behavior, the teacher can use this opportunity for reasoning. For example, the teacher might say, "Good for you, you are keeping the sand in the sandbox; now it won't get in other children's eyes" (8).

The rewards or punishments indicated in contingency statements will have the greatest long-term effect if they are just strong enough to have an effect on the child's behavior, but not so strong that the child is overwhelmed. Children who conform to a rule under a mild threat or incentive are more likely to internalize and follow the rule at other times than children who conform due to a very strong threat or incentive (5, 25, 53, 67, 88).

Teachers can institute general rules and make specific demands.--Classroom rules should be clear, reasonable, and few in number. Young children may not be able to remember long strings of complicated rules or instructions (24). Children are more likely to follow rules when they understand the reasoning behind them. Reasons directed toward concern for others help broaden children's perspectives and increase their awareness of other people's needs. In addition, rules should be

within the child's capacity to obey. It is unreasonable, for example, to expect young children to sit quietly all day without making a sound. In many cases, the children themselves can discuss and help formulate the rules they feel are essential for a smoothly working class. Contingencies can be attached to these rules, and children can help decide appropriate incentives and penalties (22, 27, 42, 50, 54, 60, 64).

Situations often arise in which children do not have a choice. In such cases teachers can state the requirement clearly and firmly, without using a question form that seems to give children a choice when in fact they have none. Direct statements such as, "It's time to go inside now;""You need to come inside," are more effective than questions such as "How about coming inside now?" or, "Don't you want to go inside?" When teachers always follow through on direct commands, children quickly learn to take such statements seriously.

If necessary, teachers can use physical aid to follow up a command. For example, the teacher can direct the child's hands to a toy that needs to be put away, and then guide the toy to the shelf. While moving a child through a required behavior, often the child will begin to cooperate. When this occurs, the teacher can praise and help the child, saying, for example, "Good for you, you are putting the blocks away. Here, I'll help you. I'll carry this one, and you can carry that one" (57,81).

Direct commands should be kept to a minimum, however. Otherwise teachers may find themselves constantly involved in compelling children to obey. The less obvious external control exerted by the teacher, the more responsibility children have for directing their own behavior and the more opportunity they will have for learning and practicing self-control (44).

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Points To Remember

1. Inductive (reasoning) disciplinary techniques facilitate the developmental shift in children's moral orientation from a reliance on external authority to a reliance on internalized humanitarian standards of right and wrong.
2. Children tend to adopt the management techniques of their teachers in their interactions with peers. Teachers who rely on punishment techniques provide punishing, coercive models for the children in their class.
3. Pleasant events following children's behavior may increase that behavior. Different events are reinforcing for different children.
4. Teacher attention is a powerful force in the classroom. Children's behaviors which receive attention are likely to occur repeatedly, while behaviors which are ignored are likely to decrease.
5. Mildly unpleasant events immediately following misbehavior may suppress that behavior. However, if teacher attention is associated with this event, the undesirable behavior may continue to occur in the future.
6. Clearly-stated contingencies and rules help children govern their own behavior. They are most effective when teachers make sure that the stated contingencies occur.

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Chapter 6
Performing Well in Academic Settings

Digest of Recommendations

Suggested Teaching Techniques	Rationale	Selected References
To help children develop attitudes and motivation which will facilitate academic performance:		
1. Give clear instructions, specifying exactly what child behaviors are required to complete a given task.	Children are less likely to become anxious if they know what is expected of them. Children are more likely to persist on a complex task if they are aware that it involves simple behaviors they can perform.	Crandall, 1963; Crandall, 1967; Endsley, 1966, 1967; Hill, 1967, 1972; Mischel, 1972; Mischel and Ebbeson, 1970; Ryan and Watson, 1968.
2. Provide positive reinforcement contingent upon the child's appropriate actions.	Contingent positive reinforcement helps children develop an internal locus of control, raises their general expectation of success, and encourages their continued performance of appropriate behaviors.	Crandall, 1969; Katovsky, Crandall and Good, 1967; Risley and Baer, 1973.
3. Avoid labeling the child's mistakes as failures. Give necessary negative feedback in a supportive atmosphere, without stressing its evaluative aspects.	Negative evaluation and feelings of failure increase children's anxiety, lower their expectation of success, and promote an external locus of control orientation.	Crandall, 1963; Crandall, 1969; Hill, 1972; Mischel, 1972; Ruebusch, 1963.

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Suggested Teaching Techniques	Rationale	Selected References
4. Always follow through on promises.	When children associate with adults who keep promises they are more likely to believe that delayed rewards will actually materialize and are more likely to delay gratification.	Mischel, 1972; Mischel and Ebbeson, 1970.

Why are Some Children Better Academic Performers than Others?

Some children seem to thrive in academic situations. Other children behave as though they would rather be anywhere other than in school. Any explanation of the variation among children in academic performance must consider individual differences in motivation and personality as well as differences in ability.

Unfortunately, the psychological research in these areas is filled with conflicting findings based on questionable measurements. Concepts such as anxiety, independence, and locus of control are difficult to pin down and define. Attitudes and motives are subjective, internal events which cannot be directly observed, but must be inferred from responses on questionnaires, projective tests, and other assessment devices. Young children often lack the verbal facility to understand and respond reliably on such measures. They may tend to choose either "yes" or "no" as a consistent response regardless of question content, and they often consistently select the last alternative given in multiple choice items. Teachers should interpret with caution any so-called psychological "truths" about children's motivational differences (47, 79, 80, 94).

In spite of conflicting findings and interpretations, some major variables have been isolated which seem to be related to academic performance, and which may be influenced by classroom experiences. An awareness of these variables can help teachers understand why individual children react differently to similar instructions and tasks.

What Individual Differences Among Children Affect Academic Performance?

Some children are more achievement-oriented than others.--Achievement motivation has been defined as the desire to gain approval, either from one's self or from others, for competent performance in situations where standards of excellence are

applied. Children who persevere through frustration, strive to perfect their performance, and set high standards for themselves are said to be highly achievement-oriented (10, 26).

Children may be highly motivated to achieve in some areas and not in others. In one study, for example, no relationship among achievement efforts by children was demonstrated in such diverse areas as intellectual tasks, mechanical tasks, physical prowess, and artistic endeavors (29). Some children are satisfied with internal feelings of accomplishment, while others strive to obtain approval from others (27). Some children evaluate their performance in terms of standards set by adults or by themselves, while others base their evaluations on a comparison with the performance of their peers. Some evidence indicates that preschoolers are concerned with absolute standards, while children of about 7 to 9 years of age become concerned with doing well both in comparison to other children and to absolute standards (69, 117).

Some studies indicate that scores on tests of achievement motivation are related to actual academic performance, while other studies do not find this relationship. It does appear that children who score highly on tests of achievement motivation have been reinforced in the past for conforming to high standards set for them by their parents (27, 29, 90, 121).

Children can learn to set their own standards for performance. Generally, children who observe someone else conforming to internalized standards of performance on a particular task will adopt similar standards for their own performance. This is especially likely to occur if an explanation of the standards accompanies the model's adherence to them. Children may reject the high standards of an exceptionally competent model and lower their own standards to compensate for perceived differences in ability. Children are likely to set high standards for their own performance if they have been rewarded in the past for setting high standards (4, 5, 8, 12, 65, 66, 73, 82).

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Some children are more anxious than others about academic situations.--The relationship between anxiety and academic performance becomes increasingly strong throughout the elementary school years. Children who perform badly on achievement tests tend to be highly anxious. This relationship could indicate that consistent poor performance makes children anxious, or it could mean that anxiety prevents children from performing well in school. Probably both explanations have some truth to them (54, 98).

In general, a moderate level of anxiety serves to enhance learning, perhaps by providing a motivating force for attending to the task. High levels of anxiety, however, tend to interfere with performance on complex tasks or tasks which involve use of a new skill (17, 19, 98). Anxiety tends to reduce the range of cues a child can attend to. Thus, anxiety may impair performance on tasks which require attending to more than one thing, although it may be helpful in screening out distracting elements (34, 53, 94).

Children characterized by a generally high level of anxiety seem to be more concerned with avoiding failure and criticism than with achieving success. Such children are upset by making mistakes, and may become even more anxious in situations where they are unsure of what to do. Such children may be afraid to venture opinion, for example, for fear that it might be wrong (53, 94). One study demonstrated that highly anxious children had trouble learning to read when the "whole word" method was used. With this method, children must frequently guess, and often their guesses are incorrect. Anxious children did better using the phonics method, where small, systematically arranged steps minimized errors (48). Children may become particularly anxious in situations where they have been made to feel that they have failed (35, 36, 45, 49, 61, 97). Children whose errors are consistently labeled as "failures" may develop an anxious preoccupation with what they are doing wrong, rather than concentrating on what they are doing right.

Children tend to become more anxious in situations where an observer is present, where evaluation and the testing aspects of a situation are stressed, where speed of performance is emphasized or time limits are imposed, and where directions are unclear (17, 19, 22, 24, 25,53, 123). If a child is low in anxiety to begin with, such situations may increase anxiety to an optimal level and facilitate performance. If a child is high in anxiety to begin with, such situations may increase anxiety to a point where it interferes with the child's ability to perform the task or learn something new. For example, children who are generally highly anxious may show repetitive, restrictive problem-solving strategies in situations which stress evaluation (53).

Teachers can reduce children's anxiety by helping them set realistic goals for performance, by deemphasizing evaluation, and by giving clear, precise instructions. Children often become less anxious in structured situations where they know exactly what to expect (26, 27, 53).

Some children attribute success to luck, others attribute success to their own efforts.--Children who believe that they are responsible for their own successes and failures are said to have an internal locus of control. Children who believe that success and failure are determined by chance or by the teacher's whim are said to have an external locus of control.

Beliefs in locus of control are established in early childhood, and may have a great influence on children's performance in school (31). In fact, a large-scale national study of factors influencing academic achievement found that locus of control was the best predictor of nonwhite's achievement scores, and the second best predictor for white students (23). Children measured as having an internal locus of control have been found to spend more time doing homework, show more persistence on complex logical tasks, receive higher grades, and do better on

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general achievement tests than children who have an external locus of control (31, 72, 75). In a few studies, however, no relationship has been found between locus control measures and achievement (58, 76).

Children may not have consistent beliefs about the locus of control of both their successes and failures. Some children, for instance, take responsibility for their successes but not failures, while others feel that failures are their fault while success is determined by luck. Children's beliefs about locus of control may have the greatest effect in situations where it is clear that the child's activity can result in positive or negative outcomes. Children who believe they are responsible for their own success will work harder if they are told a good performance will result in reward. Children who feel they can control negative outcomes will work harder to avoid failure (85).

Children measured as having an internal locus of control often have parents who are warm, supportive, permissive, flexible, approving, consistent in discipline, and who expect early independence behaviors. Children with an external locus of control often have parents who are rejecting, punitive, dominating, and critical (60, 32). In particular, it is believed that the development of an internal locus of control is fostered by a predictable environment which provides positive feedback contingent on the child's actions. Criticizing or punishing the child may lead to an external locus of control. Negative approaches discourage the child from taking responsibility for failure (60).

Some children expect to succeed.--Children who predict that they will do well, either in school or on an experimental task, generally do better than children who predict that they won't do so well. Children seem to make fairly accurate estimates not only of their own ability, but also of how hard they are willing to try. Some research indicates that factors other than general motivation and ability may distort

the accuracy of these estimates. Girls from ages 7 through 12 consistently tend to underestimate their abilities and their predictions of success, while boys consistently overestimate them. There is some evidence that the predictions are not merely reflections of differential cultural demands to appear modest or self-assured. Perhaps girls are really more likely to feel incompetent than boys (28).

Experiences with success and positive feedback tend to raise a child's expectancy of success, while negative feedback tends to lower it. When children's attention is focused on what they can accomplish, rather than on their mistakes, they may be more likely to believe that their efforts will be effective. Consequently, they may be more willing to try harder (26, 28).

Studies with eighth graders indicate that when children are grouped by ability in school, their expectation for success is related to the relative standing of their particular group, and not to their individual standing within the group. Children in the "slow" group tend to have low expectations for success, even though they may be the most advanced students within that group (28). Evidence is lacking for younger children. However, the fact that children begin judging their own performance in comparison to others by age 7 (117) indicates that even at young ages, grouping children by ability may have broad motivational effects.

Some children are more willing to wait and work for delayed rewards.--Delay of gratification is a form of self-control believed to be an important factor in academic success. Children who can put off the immediate pleasure of fooling around in order to work on a difficult problem for the delayed joy of mastering it will function better in school. Even preschoolers can wait and work for delayed rewards, and can choose a larger reward later over a smaller reward now. They are more likely to wait for a reward if they expect that the reward will actually materialize, and if they are confident they can perform the task necessary to get the reward. Chil-

dren are more likely to persist on a task that involves a delayed gratification if they have been consistently reinforced in the past for waiting and planning, and if the adults in their environment have consistently kept their promises. Children will also be more likely to delay gratification if they are exposed to models who demonstrate this behavior (6, 80, 81).

Teachers who give clear instructions and consistently follow through on clear contingency statements are more likely to gain cooperation in unpopular tasks such as cleaning up. Statements such as "As soon as you pick up these five blocks, we can have snack" will be more effective than "Let's all help clean up for snack." Hearing the former statement, children know exactly what to do before receiving snack They understand that the task has a limit and that they are competent to perform it. If the teacher has consistently followed through in the past, children will also expect that snack will be forthcoming as soon as the task is completed.

Children seek approval and assistance in different ways.--Teachers often evaluate children as dependent or independent, but the definitions of these terms are unclear. In a broad sense, all behavior can be considered dependent. Children's behavior is dependent on other people, on the environment, or on past experience. Likewise, all behavior may be considered independent. Children always initiate at least some portion of their behavior on their own. For example, children who ask for help may be considered dependent because they are not solving a problem by themselves. However, seeking out a competent person for advice or aid may be an independent method of solving a difficult problem. In fact, some psychologists believe that developing the ability to ask appropriately for assistance is an important step toward achieving independent competence (51, 88, 120).

Since the concepts of dependence and independence are so vague, it may be more useful to speak of specific types of behavior appropriate for children of different ages. It seems, for instance, that some children try to stay near adults more than

other children. Some children also seek more attention, approval, and assistance than other children. Usually, children 2 or 3 years of age seek more attention from adults than from peers. As children reach the age of 4 or 5, they begin to seek attention more frequently from peers (67).

Children tend to seek more social responses from other people if they are under stress or if they have been isolated from other people for a short time. The behaviors children use to gain attention, however, are behaviors which have proved successful in the past. If children have received attention for such inappropriate behaviors as whining or seeking help for tasks which could be accomplished alone, they will continue to use such behaviors as attention-getters. Teachers can help children learn appropriate attention-getting methods by suggesting new behaviors and by giving attention only when appropriate behaviors are performed. For example, a teacher can say, "When you ask me in a clear voice, I will help you." "You can unzip your own coat. Just hold the zipper here and pull down. Good for you, you did it by yourself!" (67, 89).

What Environmental Conditions Influence Children's Motivation and Performance?

Teachers' expectations may not have an overwhelming effect on children's performance.--In 1966, Rosenthal and Jacobsen reported a study in which elementary school teachers were given false information on the IQ scores of children in their classrooms. By the end of the year, IQ scores increased for children whom teachers expected to be bright, while IQ scores decreased for children whom teachers believed to have less ability. The authors inferred that teachers' expectations were a major factor in determining children's academic performance (91, 92). Since that time many psychologists have criticized the Rosenthal study. They have noted, for example, that some of the scores reported for individual children could not possibly

occur on the test used, and that the effect occurred in only a few classrooms with younger children for whom the test was inappropriate (104, 115). Other psychologists who attempted to replicate the findings in different schools were unable to find the same results (20, 33, 42, 43).

Evidence now indicates that there is no automatic Pygmalion-in-the-classroom effect. It has been found, however, that if teachers rank the children in their classrooms based on their own knowledge of each child's past performance, their predictions of how well the children will do are usually borne out (33).

Teachers may behave differently toward children they expect to do very well and children they expect to do poorly. Such differential behavior may reinforce differences in children's motivation and ability which already exist. In one study it was found that teachers responded more positively to children they themselves have rated as likely to perform well in school. Teachers were more likely to praise such children for correct answers, less likely to criticize them for wrong answers, more likely to respond to their wrong answers with a restatement of the problem, and more likely to give feedback after each answer (15). Teachers should make every effort to distribute their support fairly among all children.

Different types of reinforcement affect children's motivation and performance.-- Motivation and reinforcement are complex issues about which psychologists are still debating. The debate currently centers around the issue of intrinsic and extrinsic reinforcement and their effects on children's behavior and learning.

Children will often engage in activities for the sheer joy of performing them, especially if the activity provides a moderate challenge to the child's abilities. Children will also improve their performance or perfect a skill if the activity itself provides immediate feedback. Tasks which are inherently interesting and which contain built-in feedback are said to provide intrinsic reinforcement (56).

Reinforcement which is not inherent in an activity is called extrinsic reinforcement. Extrinsic reinforcement can also motivate children to perform activities and can provide feedback which facilitates improved performance. Social approval or criticism and tangible rewards or punishments fall into this category.

A great deal of evidence indicates that positive comments from an adult can influence children to spend more time doing a task (1, 14, 21, 57, 101). The effect may be even more pronounced if teachers comment on an activity intermittently, rather than every time it is performed. Under these conditions, children will be likely to continue in an activity during fairly long periods of time without any encouragement at all (13, 36).

Tangible rewards, such as money, candy, snack, or prizes have also been successful motivators for children (87, 89). Under some conditions, however, if children believe they are performing a task for the purpose of gaining some material reward, their intrinsic interest in the task may be reduced. In one study, preschoolers who had demonstrated an avid interest in drawing with colored felt pens were promised a special certificate if they would draw a picture for a visiting adult. The children worked hard for their reward, but later showed a lack of interest in the same pens they had previously enjoyed. Children who drew a picture for an adult without the promise of a reward maintained their intrinsic interest in the pens, even though they received the same reward as a surprise (64).

In this study, the reward per se did not affect the children's intrinsic motivation. The reduction in motivation was produced by the process of contracting to perform an activity in order to receive the reward. The children's intrinsic motivation to use pens in this study was already at a high level. Contracts and contingencies can be an effective means of encouraging children to engage in an activity in which they are not already interested, or an activity which may only

elicit a high degree of intrinsic motivation after a minimum amount of skill has been acquired. Teachers should beware, however, of setting up unnecessary contingencies and reward systems for children who are already motivated to perform academic activities.

Teachers are interested not only in motivating children to perform activities which will lead to learning, but also in helping children to improve their performance. Improvement involves feedback. The method a teacher uses to monitor learning should include precise information about which of the child's efforts are headed in the right direction and which are not useful. Studies in which young children choose between two responses, one right and one wrong, demonstrate that the fastest learning occurs when an adult tells the child which response was right and which was wrong. Providing a tangible reward following correct responses generally is not as effective as giving clear information. Some researchers believe that tangible rewards not only provide incomplete feedback but also distract children from the learning task (77, 107, 108, 109, 110).

What Can Teachers Do To Enhance Children's Performance And Interest In School Activities?

Psychologists have discovered no clear-cut solutions to the problems of motivation and achievement in school. Children arrive in the classroom with different expectations, beliefs, standards, anxieties and abilities. All these factors interact in different ways with particular classroom situations and learning tasks.

Creative teachers, however, can experiment with different methods of reducing children's anxiety, capitalizing on their intrinsic interests, and providing non-threatening feedback. Teachers can also structure situations in which children take increasing responsibility for planning and evaluating their own efforts, so that they will develop the confidence to persist in new and challenging learning activities.

One conflict seems to be inherent in the research findings. Children become more achievement oriented in situations where their performance is directed toward specified goals and evaluated by specific standards. Such situations, however, may undermine children's intrinsic interest in activities and may increase their anxiety to the point where they can no longer learn effectively. The teacher is left with the problem of setting high standards and providing both positive and negative feedback without increasing anxiety and turning learning experiences into distasteful work.

A possible solution is to emphasize the process of learning rather than the end product. Children can be praised for trying hard, for persisting in difficult tasks, and for experimenting with new strategies. Teachers can emphasize the feedback aspect of mistakes, rather than the evaluative aspect. One first grade teacher found that children were so worried about making mistakes that they refused to venture an opinion in class. She told the children that "everyone makes mistakes -- that's how we learn," and encouraged children to try again when they made an error. This teacher also demonstrated a constructive attitude towards errors by making mistakes herself, in front of the class, saying, "I guess I made a mistake. Maybe there's another way to do it." Modeling and allowing mistakes to occur in a supportive atmosphere may help reduce children's anxiety about evaluation (3).

Teachers can provide a predictable and supportive environment which children can influence as a result of their own efforts. Teachers can consistently give feedback contingent upon the child's behavior. They can also follow through on all promises, even if the child seems to forget the promise. Negative feedback might include some positive comments concerning the general correctness of the approach. A negative comment may be softened merely by acknowledging that the child is trying hard to solve a difficult problem. Children might be encouraged to correct their own papers, thus reducing the evaluative aspects of feedback. Such an environment

may help children learn to be less anxious, to take responsibility for their own successes and failures, and to delay gratification (10, 80, 60).

Children can be encouraged to plan the structure of their day, or to plan the steps they will follow to complete a particular task. Planning may make the children aware of their own responsibility for carrying out an activity. As children break down a complex task into discrete steps with the assistance of the teacher, their confidence in their ability to complete the task may increase. As they successfully perform each step, their expectation of success on succeeding steps should increase (28, 80). Children who have choices in their daily activities may be more likely to choose tasks which provide them with intrinsic reinforcement.

Points to Remember

1. Evaluating children's academic performance according to high standards may make them more achievement-oriented but it may also increase their level of anxiety.
2. While moderate levels of anxiety may enhance learning, excessive anxiety may interfere with children's performance on complex tasks or tasks which involve the use of a new skill.
3. Children's anxiety increases in situations where an observer is present, where evaluation and testing are stressed, where speed of performance is emphasized, and where directions are unclear.
4. If children believe they are responsible for their own successes and failures and believe they can succeed on a particular task, they may try harder and do better.
5. Success experiences in a predictable environment may help children develop an internal locus of control and a higher expectation of success.

6. Children may be more willing to delay gratification if they have been reinforced in the past for waiting and planning, if they are exposed to models who also delay gratification, and if the adults they know usually keep their promises.
7. Teachers may tend to be more supportive to children they expect to do well, but teachers' expectations probably do not have the overwhelming effect on school performance indicated in the original Rosenthal experiment, often referred to as the Pygmalion-in-the-classroom effect.
8. Providing positive comments or tangible rewards can be an effective way of encouraging children to try an activity which initially provides little intrinsic motivation. However, contracting to perform a task for an external reward may reduce children's intrinsic interest in the task if that interest is already at a high level.

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Chapter 7

Peer Interaction

Digest of Recommendations

Suggested Teaching Techniques	Rationale	Selected References
To increase complex social interactions:		
1. Create dramatic situations and roles for children to play.	In preschool situations, more complex interactions take place during dramatic play than during other types of activities.	Charlesworth and Hartup, 1967; Shure, 1963; Thomson, 1972.
2. Provide equipment which can be used by several children at a time.	Children are more likely to interact when they are engaged in a common activity.	Quilitch and Risley, 1973; Thomson, 1972.
3. Reinforce children who are playing well together by providing additional equipment or by offering a smile or brief comment.	Teacher attention to group play tends to facilitate and prolong the interaction.	Harris, Wolf, and Baer, 1967.
4. Suggest ways for an isolate child to interact with a group, and attend to that child only when the child approaches other children.	Suggestions, cues, and contingent reinforcement can be used effectively to increase a child's social interactions.	Allen, Hart, Buell, Harris, and Wolf, 1964; Buell, Stoddard, Harris and Baer, 1968; Hart, Reynolds, Baer, Brawley, and Harris, 1968 Keogh, Miller, and

Suggested Teaching Techniques	Rationale	Selected References
		LeBlanc, 1973; Miller, Holmberg, and LeBlanc, 1971; Pinkston, Reese, LeBlanc, and Baer, 1973.
5. Include less popular children in special group activities, or put them in charge of desired resources.	Children tend to increase their liking for peers who have shared a pleasant group experience and peers who have given them reinforcement.	Blau and Rafferty, 1970; Heber and Heber, 1957; Kerby and Toler, 1970; Lott and Lott, 1960.

Peer Interactions

Why Are Interactions Among Children Important?

Although children can learn a great deal from adults, their interactions with each other provide different and equally valuable opportunities for learning. Children learn skills by observing each other, and they communicate information to one another. In addition, the egalitarian nature of peer interactions provides a unique forum for the development of cognitive skills. Children relate to peers of similar status and ability differently than they relate to adults, who assume a higher status due to their greater size, power, and competence. Cognitive psychologist Jean Piaget has suggested that one of the cognitive limitations young children must overcome is their egocentrism, or relative inability to consider situations from different points of view. Piaget further suggests that the conflicts which arise when equally egocentric children interact may provoke children into considering each other's perspectives. Social interaction with peers may provide a crucial arena for breaking down egocentric thought (45, 46, 49).

Experience interacting with peers is also important for developing necessary social skills. In our society is has become increasingly important for people to learn to get along with one another. The skills necessary for successful interpersonal relations can be learned in early childhood.

What Characterizes Children's Groups?

The number and duration of children's social interactions increase with age (50). Even 3-year-olds, however, will spontaneously play together and engage in complicated verbal communications. In one study of communication patterns among pairs of preschoolers, 62 percent of the utterances made by children received a

verbal response from another child, while an additional 23 percent attracted the listener's attention (42). Preschoolers in another study were already learning to use stylized conversational routines to engage each other in prolonged interactions. A sample conversation went like this: "Do you know what?" "What?" "You're a nut!" In this example, one child summoned the other and the other answered. The initiator obligated by the routine to provide a reason for the summons, playfully turned the interaction into a joke. Children's conversations begin to take on the stylistic characteristics of adult conversations at a very early age (16).

Most investigations of how children form complex social groups have dealt with older children and adolescents. However, it has been shown that even preschoolers spontaneously form structured groups which share simple norms. Norms in groups of young children may include sanctions governing social interaction and interests held in common. Teachers are familiar with the "we-they" statements made by children, such as "We don't like playing ball, right? We like to play cowboys!" (14, 23).

In addition, children seem to arrange hierarchical dominance orders within their groups, including leaders, followers, and outcasts. Unfortunately, little is known about the processes governing hierarchy formation (23).

Environmental situations have a strong influence on the level of complexity of children's social interactions. Among preschoolers, complex social interactions are most likely to occur during dramatic play and in the housekeeping corner, while single child play and parallel play (where children perform similar activities near each other without cooperating in a single activity) are most likely to occur in game, art and book areas (10, 52). One study demonstrated that providing social toys--such as cards, checkers, and group games--to 7-year-olds encourages more complex social interaction than providing toys for individual work, such as gyroscopes, crayons, puzzles, and play dough (48). When teachers attend to group play and

encourage it by providing positive comments, new suggestions, and extra equipment, the number of complex interactions is likely to increase (19).

Which Children Are Well-Liked By Peers?

Some children are always welcome among groups of peers playing together, while others seem to be outcasts. Popular children are generally friendly and outgoing, and seem to be sensitive to the needs of others. Of course, while friendliness may help a child become accepted by other children, peer acceptance may also inspire friendly sociability. Children seem to prefer peers of the same sex. From about age 3 on, boys play mainly with boys and girls play with girls (23).

Observations of preschool children indicate reciprocity in peer interactions. The number of positive social initiatives made by a child is related to the number of positive initiatives received by that child. The reinforcement principle applies here. Children who are positively reinforcing for peers will be approached more frequently. Positive reinforcement from these friendly approaches then encourages increased friendly behavior (10, 25, 32, 36, 40).

Children who spend a great deal of time interacting with adults tend to be less popular with their peers. As children grow older they tend to spend more time with peers and less time with adults. However, emotional dependence upon adults may interfere with this developmental shift (34, 35, 37, 41). For one thing, a child who spends a great deal of time with adults simply has less time to spend in peer interaction. Inexperienced teachers often tend to spend time interacting with a single child. While this may be reinforcing for teachers, they should consider whether the child's time might be better spent learning to associate with peers.

Situational factors can influence children's social standing. In one study, first graders were given tasks to perform either by working together or by sitting

near each other while working independently. Merely being near other children had no effect on social preference. On the other hand, cooperative interaction, particularly with peers of the opposite sex, increased the children's liking for each other (26).

Other evidence indicates that social attractiveness increases when children see rewards given to peers and when they themselves enjoy a pleasant experience in the presence of other children. Groups that work toward a common goal and succeed tend to increase their liking for other members of the group (27). Children who play a game together and all win prizes tend to increase their liking for each other (8, 33).

How Do Children Influence Each Other's Behavior?

Among the many sources of influence in a child's environment, the peer group is one of the most potent. Children feel pressured to conform to peer group norms, they imitate the behavior of other children, and they change their own behavior as a result of positive and negative reinforcement provided by peers.

As children grow older, they are more likely to conform to group norms.-- Studies of compliance to group norms are generally designed to investigate the extent to which a child will agree to a false norm expressed by a peer group. In a typical study, children are asked to select which one of several lines matches a standard line of a given length. The group has been coached to choose an obviously inappropriate line, and the unsuspecting target child is asked for an opinion. In such situations, preschoolers do not conform to the group oninion to any great extent. By age 7, children begin to show a great deal of conformity. They will go along with what the group says no matter what their private beliefs may be. Towards adolescence, surprisingly enough, compliance tends to diminish. If a general

conclusion can be drawn from such studies, it would be that the elementary school years constitute a period of great responsiveness to normative influence from peers (7, 23, 29, 33).

Children provide behavior models for each other.---Many studies have demonstrated that almost any type of behavior exhibited by one child may be imitated by an observing peer. Children imitate both aggressive and sharing behavior (24, 28). Children set standards for themselves similar to the standards set by children they have observed (5). Children who are afraid of dogs become less afraid if they see several children having fun with dogs. Initially fearful children may even begin to enjoy playing with dogs under these conditions (4, 6).

Children's behavioral changes as a result of peer reinforcement.---Observations of children playing in a preschool setting indicate that a great deal of children's interpersonal behavior can be classified as reinforcing to peers. Children tend to deliver more positive reinforcement to peers of the same sex than to peers of the opposite sex. Older children tend to deliver more positive reinforcement than younger children. Those children who give the most positive reinforcement to other children tend to scatter their reinforcements to a larger number of children. They also tend to receive more reinforcement in return. The behaviors labelled "positive reinforcement" in these studies include giving positive attention by praising, helping, smiling, or conversing; giving affection and personal acceptance, both physical and verbal; submitting to other children by sharing, accepting their ideas, compromising, or complying with a request; and giving tokens such as toys or food (10, 13).

A great deal of evidence indicates that attention from peers has a strong influence on children's classroom behavior. In several studies, children have been coached to ignore certain behaviors of a particular child and to attend to certain

other behaviors. Generally, those behaviors which received peer attention increased, while ignored behaviors decreased. In one study, a preschool boy became less aggressive when peers were instructed to walk away from him whenever he behaved aggressively. Another boy's rate of cooperative play increased when peers were instructed to attend to him whenever he was playing cooperatively (56). In one sixth grade classroom, when children were trained to stop paying attention to one child's disruptive behavior, the child's disruptive behavior decreased (53).

Teachers can influence in subtle ways the contingencies peers set for each other. When teachers ignore inappropriate behaviors and give positive attention to cooperative friendly behavior, children often imitate the teacher's example. They often stop responding positively to negative behaviors and begin to compliment each other's constructive actions (51).

How Can Teachers Influence Peer Interaction?

Some teachers may feel that they have no business interfering in a child's social relationships. Children should be free to choose whom they want to play with and how they want to play. It is true that not all children want or need to be popular or to have a large circle of friends. School, however, provides an opportunity for learning social as well as cognitive skills. The social skills learned in school, particularly at a young age, may well persist into adulthood. Children will learn from their social interactions, whether a teacher intervenes or not. However, some children may learn maladaptive patterns of social interaction, either because they lack social skills or because they receive reinforcement for negative behaviors. "Bad social habits" may interfere with later learning of more acceptable social behaviors. A child who lacks social skill is not "free". Perhaps that child would like to join a group activity, but has no idea of how to go about it. Once

a child has mastered the skills of interacting with other children, that child is then free to choose when and with whom to interact.

Teachers can structure situations and provide materials which encourage social interaction.--Teachers can create dramatic roles for children. For example, a teacher might suggest setting up a store with customers, storekeepers, and delivery people. Dramatic play situations tend to foster complex social interaction (10, 52). Teachers can also extend play already in progress. Suppose Ann is building with blocks, and John is driving a truck nearby. A teacher might suggest that John "deliver" some blocks to Ann, or that Ann build a garage for John's truck.

Equipment which can be used by several children at the same time provides a setting for social interaction (48). Horizontal tire swings allow several children to swing together. Ordinary swings can be set up side by side so that children can converse while swinging. Group games and cooperative tasks on which children work together toward a common goal also foster social interaction.

Teachers can reinforce social interaction.--A teacher who notices when children are playing together can prolong the interaction by bringing in additional equipment or offering a brief comment (19). At such times teachers should avoid prolonged conversations with individual children which might disrupt the interaction of the group. The teacher should facilitate what is happening between the children, and not vie with peers for the attention of a particular child.

For some children, learning to play with others does not come easily. Every classroom has its isolates--children who play by themselves and are ignored by other children. Teachers often feel sorry for such children and give them a great deal of attention and support, attempting to make them feel more "confident." Such attention can have a detrimental effect, however. Time spent interacting with the teacher alone is time that cannot be spent learning to interact with peers.

Teachers can effectively help the isolate acquire the social skills to gain peer acceptance by suggesting ways for such a child to become involved with others and by giving attention contingent upon the child's engaging in some social interaction (2, 9, 20, 30, 47).

A particularly successful technique for increasing social play in preschoolers is for the teacher to move away from the isolate child after suggesting a possible source of interaction, returning to give the child attention only when the child begins to follow the suggestion. This technique was found to be more effective than standing by the isolate and continuing to suggest possible interactions until the child approached other children (39). A teacher might say, for example, "Tom (the isolate), you could deliver this mail to the children in the playhouse." The teacher would then turn away. If Tom moved toward the playhouse and attempted to deliver mail, the teacher could return to Tom and the group, supporting Tom with a comment such as "Tom has brought some mail for your house."

Teachers can increase the isolate's status in the group.--One effective means of raising a child's group standing is to put that child in charge of desired resources. A teacher might say, "Donna, Alice (the isolate) has some cars for your garage." In accepting the cars, Donna must accept Alice as well.

One preschool isolate was given a bag of candy to dispense to other children every day for several days. He was to ask children which candy they wanted, and then find it for them. Observations indicated that the boy began generally to engage in more cooperative play following dispensation of the candy. The candy had provided him with a reason to approach other children and gain practice in making social initiatives. In addition, being in charge of a powerful reinforcer enhanced the boy's status in the group. The procedure took very little of the teacher's time (31).

Since children tend to increase their liking for group members who have shared in a pleasant experience (8, 27, 33), a teacher might include less popular children in a special group activity. A teacher might say, for example, "David, (the isolate), you can choose two friends to come and help us make cookies," (or set the table, pass out snack, clean the blackboards). In addition to providing reinforcement to the group, such procedures demonstrate that the teacher holds the particular child in high esteem.

Points to Remember

1. Children engage in more complex social interactions when participating in dramatic play, when playing with social toys, and when interacting in groups which receive the attention of teachers.
2. Children who enjoy a pleasant experience together generally increase their liking for each other.
3. Children influence each other's behavior through modeling and reinforcement. Peer attention is a particularly powerful reinforcer in the classroom.
4. Isolate children may remain isolate if teachers spend a lot of time with them individually. Isolate children are likely to engage in social interaction if teachers attend to them only when they approach other children.

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